Annotated Classics

IVANHOE

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT



ANNOTATED BY

ERICA ABBETT

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Foreword
By Erica Abbett

If you take nothing else from this foreword, hear me now: go get the audiobook of *Ivanhoe* narrated by David Rintoul.

Seriously, go get it! If you're new to Audible, they'll give it to you for free. And if you're a member, you already know how to use your credits.

The only hitch is that they mislabelled the chapters, so **start at chapter two in the audiobook**. If you start at chapter one, you'll be listening to one edition's foreword forever, and will never have the patience to read the actual book.

Come back when it's ready!

***

I'm normally ambivalent[1] when it comes to audiobooks, but not so with *Ivanhoe*. I spent a 14-hour drive from Texas to Minnesota utterly transfixed[2], almost disappointed when the drive ended because I wanted nothing more than to know what happened next!

Don't get me wrong: I have nothing against any other audiobook. I just think my imagination can do anything a narrator does, so the deciding factor is mainly one of convenience. But I will be the first to admit my imagination is inferior to David Rintoul's rendition for one simple reason: I was not sufficiently acquainted with Norman England to get all the vitally-significant details right.

For example: one of the most interesting characters is the Knight Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert. Sometimes he's referred to as "Brian." How would *you* pronounce that? For me, it would be like "Brian from accounting."

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[1] Ambivalent - Characterized by mixed feelings; could go either way

[2] Transfixed - Captivated; obsessed to the point of being unable to move

This mispronunciation matters because the central conflict is between the Normans (basically French) and Saxons (basically English). Brian isn't "Brian" as we might say in America, but "Bree-ahn," a powerful Norman.

How to Use This Book

There's a bit of a conundrum[1] when it comes to combining audiobooks with annotated editions: namely, the audiobook doesn't read the annotations.

That's OK. Let this book be your reference point and nighttime backup, when you want to keep reading but it would be awkward to lie in bed doing nothing, listening to an audiobook. Pick up this book instead.

The two editions work hand-in-hand, but start off with the audiobook to nail down the pronunciation and personalities.

Historical Context (Read This!)

Before you begin, there are a few things you must know to appreciate Sir Walter Scott's masterpiece. And frankly, if you speak English, you should know all this anyway.

1066: The Norman Conquest

In 1066, the Normans (whom you might consider French with a Viking background) conquered England at the Battle of Hastings. Led by William the Conqueror, they brought their still-very-Latin-looking French with them to England.

You know how almost all the "big" words in English come from Latin? This is why. England's new rulers spoke big, fancy words, and those words eventually merged with the local language.

Like most conquered populations, the Saxons didn't much care for their Norman rulers. They hated the Normans for killing most of the noble Saxon families. They hated the two-tier legal system. And they *particularly* hated that they were no longer able to hunt in their own forests, most of which were now considered "royal" forests. Normans could go hunting for fun, but Saxons couldn't even hunt to feed their

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[1] Conundrum - Predicament; problem



A scene from the Bayeux Tapestry, which is a staggering 230 feet long, depicting the death of King Harold Godwinson at the Battle of Hastings. Note the writing: "Harold Rex Interfectus Est," which is basically perfect Latin.

families.

1194: Richard the Lionheart

Ivanhoe opens about four generations after the Norman conquest. The Norman King Richard the Lionheart is on the throne, but he's more interested in fighting than ruling. Shortly after being crowned, he gallivants off to join the Third Crusade, leaving his wicked brother Prince John to rule in his stead.

And though it's been more than a century since the Battle of Hastings, the tensions are still keenly felt between the Normans and Saxons. In addition to the aforementioned grievances, the two groups didn't even speak the same language (though a sort of Frenglish is emerging

as a *lingua franca*,[1] which will form the foundation of the language we speak today).

My inner linguist is fascinated by how many tensions from the time period we *still* see in modern English. What's the difference between a house and a mansion? Both serve the same purpose, but there is an obvious built-in hierarchy. "House" is of Saxon origin, and "mansion" is definitively Norman. Saxons lived in houses; Normans lived in *mansions*.

In the first chapter, Wamba the Jester makes an extended joke about these linguistic biases. When pigs are filthy and grunting, they're "swine" (Saxon). But when pigs are prepared and ready to be enjoyed, they're "pork" (Norman).

Saxons were legally and linguistically second-class citizens in their own country, and they were about as happy as you or I would be given the circumstances.

The Third Crusade

As I mentioned earlier, King Richard the Lionheart was a bit of a romantic. Governing wasn't really his thing; he wanted to fight for Christendom, and that's exactly what he did shortly after being crowned king of England.

This time period was known as the Third Crusade, when the various kings of western Europe united in an attempt to free Jerusalem from Islamic rule.

People think the Middle East has always been dominated by Islam, but it was actually the heart of Christendom for about 700 years. To Richard the Lionheart and his contemporaries, Jerusalem was very much Christian land in hostile hands.

And it wasn't just Jerusalem that concerned them. Christendom was largely a continuation of the Roman Empire, yet within a century of Muhammad's death in 632 A.D., half of it had been conquered. Think of that! By the reign of King Richard in the 12th century, all the most prosperous cities had fallen…Alexandria, Antioch, Hippo…The surviving kings of Christendom were hemmed in on the west, south,

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[1] Lingua franca - Common language

and east, and they saw the threat as existential[1].

"The best defense is a good offense," they probably said, poring over hand-painted maps by candlelight. "If we reclaim Palestine from the Sultan Saladin, it will be a powerful symbol of our might."

By the way, you'll see that everyone in *Ivanhoe* uses the word "Palestine" to refer to the area around Jerusalem. That's because they were still using the old Roman name—it wasn't until the mid-20th century that "Palestinian" loosely came to mean "Muslim" from the area. If there was any passive-aggressive political subtext in the verbiage of these medieval characters, it would've been that "Palestine" was the Roman and/or Christian word. "*We* took it from the Jews and renamed it. It's been our holy land for a thousand years. You can't have it!"

But back to the Third Crusade: it was a bit of a mess, to be honest. The European rulers spent almost as much time bickering amongst themselves as they did fighting Saladin. Duke Leopold V of Austria even bailed early, furious that he fought as valiantly as any king, but was forbidden from hoisting his flag after successful battles. The final straw came after the two-year Siege of Acre[2], when his cousin hoisted their flag on his behalf. King Richard actually ordered it taken down. "No crown, no flag" was the kings' official policy.

A King's Ransom (Leopold's Revenge)

Leopold was enraged, especially considering how hard he fought to retake Acre. The funny thing is, the modern flag of Austria actually comes from this battle. Leopold was said to have fought so courageously, he would regularly return from the front lines drenched in blood. Undressing, he would find that his formerly-white tunic was bright red…except for a thick, white stripe beneath his belt. This vivid imagery clearly became



The national flag of Austria traces its roots to Leopold V and the Siege of Acre. This isn't the flag he wanted to hoist, but he did eventually get permission from the Holy Roman Emperor to use it.

[1] Existential - Relating to one's existence or survival

[2] Acre - A coastal city in modern-day northern Israel

symbolic, as he petitioned the Holy Roman Emperor to allow him to use it as his flag thereafter.

After Leopold stormed off in a huff, the kings carried on, though obviously weaker without him. When they were within 15 miles of Jerusalem, they signed a peace treaty with Saladin that allowed unarmed Christian pilgrims and merchants to enter Jerusalem.

Slow clap for the re-conquerors. That's honestly not that great of a victory.

But that's not the worst part: when Richard was traveling back to England, he was kidnapped and imprisoned by our old friend Leopold. Still fuming over the flag fiasco, Leopold locked him in an Austrian dungeon and demanded a king's ransom.[1]

At the beginning of *Ivanhoe*, King Richard is still being held prisoner in Austria. Prince John's new taxes are supposedly to pay the ransom, but he's keeping most of the money for himself. And the payments that *did* make it to Leopold? Most people agree that they were more "bribe" than "ransom," in order to keep Richard imprisoned for longer…

Final Points

Ivanhoe is a hard book, and I have footnotes at the bottom of almost every page to help you through it. Nevertheless, I do *not* want you to read every single footnote!

Read them if you're confused, but not for the sake of it. Convenient as they are, they *will* take you out of the story.

Here are some other resources I've added, which you're free to use or ignore:

1) **Cast of Characters** - If I have one criticism of *Ivanhoe*, it's that there are too many important characters with a prominent "B". Do we really need a Bracy, Bœuf, Beaumanoir, and Bois-Guilbert? In order to avoid the dreaded, "Which one is that again?" I've created a cast of characters at the front of the book.

2) **Footnote Placement** - I've added more than 2,000 footnotes

[1] I hope you appreciate the wordplay…"You think you're so special because you're a king? Fine! Your friends will pay a king's ransom if they want you back!"

to this edition of Ivanhoe. If a footnote follows a word, it usually defines that word. If it follows a punctuation mark, it usually explains the preceding phrase or sentence.

3) **Glossary of Terms** - I've used my infallible[1] judgement in determining where to put footnotes. Sometimes I repeat myself; often I don't. If you can't remember a definition, check the back of the book! I've added a book-specific glossary of terms for your convenience.

4) **Illustrations** - *Ivanhoe* has been reprinted countless times since its was first released in 1819, and many of the older editions contain exquisite illustrations. They're all in the public domain now, and I've spent untold delightful hours poring over these old books, curating and enhancing the best illustrations for this edition. As such, the images you'll see in this book were not included in Scott's original publication, nor are they all from the same book. For a complete list of sources, see the "Image Credits" section at the back.

All that being said, I'll see you on the other side! I can't wait.

-Erica Abbett

2025

[1] Infallible - Unfailing; incapable of being wrong

Cast of Characters

By Erica Abbett

Saxons (indigenous english)[1]:

Cedric - Pronounced "*SED-rick*," Cedric is a Saxon nobleman who loathes the Normans and wants to see Saxons regain their sovereignty. He's also the father of Ivanhoe and the guardian of Rowena.

Wilfred of Ivanhoe - Disinherited son of Cedric. Went to Palestine to fight in the Third Crusade under King Richard. In love with Lady Rowena.

Lady Rowena - Pronounced "r*oe-EE-nuh*," Lady Rowena is the beautiful ward[2] of Cedric the Saxon. She's a descendant of Alfred the Great, and Cedric hopes she'll marry Athelstane (also of royal Saxon blood) to recreate the Saxon monarchy.

Gurth - Swineherd in the service of Cedric

Wamba - Jester in the service of Cedric

Athelstane of Coningsburgh - Pronounced "*Ethel-stain*," he's Saxon of royal birth. Loves to eat.

Normans (frenchies who conquered england)[3]:

King Richard the Lionheart - King of England. Fought in the Third Crusade; kidnapped by Duke Leopold of Austria on the way home.

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[1] The Saxons technically came from Germany, but they'd been in England for about 600 years by the time of the Norman conquest and very much saw themselves as the indigenous people being oppressed by Norman invaders.

[2] Ward - Someone (usually a minor) under the care of a non-parent

[3] The legendary Viking Rollo became the Duke of Normandy in 911, approximately 150 years before the Norman conquest. However, because his people quickly intermarried and adopted the local customs, the Normans were essentially very aggressive Frenchmen by the time of *Ivanhoe*.

Prince John - King Richard's brother, ruling England in Richard's absence. Corrupt.

Brian de Bois-Guilbert - Pronounced *"Bree-ahn duh Bwah Gill-BEAR,"* he's a Knight Templar. Can beat anyone in combat except King Richard and Wilfred of Ivanhoe.

Reginald Front-de-Bœuf - Pronounced *"Reginal FRON-duh-beuf,"* he's Cedric the Saxon's neighbor. Fearsome. Name translates to something like "forehead of beef" or "bull's forehead."

Maurice De Bracy - Leader of a band of mercenaries[1] called the "Condottieri" or "Free Companions."

Philip de Malvoisin - Lives near Cedric; not known for treating Saxons or Jews kindly. Brother of the Templar Albert de Malvoisin.

Waldemar Fitzurse - Shrewd advisor to Prince John.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT CHARACTERS:

Prior Aymer (Prior of Jorvaulx) - Norman prior who doesn't take his vows too seriously. Enjoys the finer things in life.

Isaac of York - Jewish moneylender; persecuted for his religion; father of Rebecca.

Rebecca of York - Daughter of Isaac of York. Faithful; beautiful; skilled as a healer.

Locksley - Captain of thieves, you probably know him as Robin Hood. He's of Saxon origin, but loyal to King Richard.

Urfried/Ulrica - Saxon woman kidnapped by Front-de-Bœuf's father

Lucas Beaumanoir - Grand Master of the Knights Templar. Religious fanatic.

Albert de Malvoisin - Shrewd Templar; not a true believer, but good at faking it when necessary. Brother of Philip de Malvoisin.

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[1] Mercenaries - Soldiers for sale to the highest bidder



Now fitted the halter, now traversed the cart,
And often took leave,—but seemed loath to depart!
—Prior.[1]

[1] Walter Scott is simply referencing his habit of ending books…Only to start writing new ones!

CHAPTER I

Thus communed these; while to their lowly dome,
The full-fed swine[1] return'd with evening home;
Compell'd, reluctant, to the several sties,
With din[2] obstreperous[3], and ungrateful cries.

POPE'S ODYSSEY

IN THAT PLEASANT DISTRICT of merry England which is watered by the river Don, there extended in ancient times a large forest, covering the greater part of the beautiful hills and valleys which lie between Sheffield and the pleasant town of Doncaster. The remains of this extensive wood are still to be seen at the noble seats of Wentworth, of Warncliffe Park, and around Rotherham. Here haunted of yore the fabulous Dragon of Wantley; here were fought many of the most desperate battles during the Civil Wars of the Roses; and here also flourished in ancient times those bands of gallant outlaws, whose deeds have been rendered so popular in English song.[4]

Such being our chief scene, the date of our story refers to a period towards the end of the reign of Richard I.,[5] when his return from his long captivity had become an event rather wished than hoped for by his despairing subjects,[6] who were in the meantime subjected to every species of subordinate oppression. The nobles, whose power had be-

---

[1] Swine - Pigs

[2] Din - A loud, unpleasant noise

[3] Obstreperous - Noisy and difficult to control

[4] Don't get hung up on the details. He's just saying, "In merry old England…"

[5] Circa 1194 C.E.

[6] Reminder: Richard gallivanted off on the Third Crusade almost immediately after becoming king. At this point, King Leopold of Austria is holding Richard prisoner (see my foreword for details). Richard's Brother, Prince John, has been ruling England in Richard's absence…And bribing Leopold to keep Richard imprisoned.

come exorbitant[1] during the reign of Stephen, and whom the prudence of Henry the Second had scarce reduced to some degree of subjection to the crown, had now resumed their ancient license in its utmost extent; despising the feeble interference of the English Council of State, fortifying their castles, increasing the number of their dependants, reducing all around them to a state of vassalage, and striving by every means in their power, to place themselves each at the head of such forces as might enable him to make a figure in the national convulsions which appeared to be impending.[2]

The situation of the inferior gentry, or Franklins, as they were called, who, by the law and spirit of the English constitution, were entitled to hold themselves independent of feudal tyranny, became now unusually precarious[3]. If, as was most generally the case, they placed themselves under the protection of any of the petty kings in their vicinity, accepted of feudal offices in his household, or bound themselves by mutual treaties of alliance and protection, to support him in his enterprises, they might indeed purchase temporary repose[4]; but it must be with the sacrifice of that independence which was so dear to every English bosom, and at the certain hazard of being involved as a party in whatever rash expedition the ambition of their protector might lead him to undertake. On the other hand, such and so multiplied were the means of vexation and oppression possessed by the great Barons, that they never wanted the pretext, and seldom the will, to harass and pursue, even to the very edge of destruction, any of their less powerful neighbours, who attempted to separate themselves from their authority, and to trust for their protection, during the dangers of the times, to their own inoffensive conduct, and to the laws of the land.[5]

A circumstance which greatly tended to enhance the tyranny of the nobility, and the sufferings of the inferior classes, arose from the conse-

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[1] Exorbitant - Unreasonably high; excessive

[2] "The nobles took advantage of the power vacuum to fortify and enrich themselves, usually at the expense of the peasants."

[3] Precarious - Unstable; dangerous

[4] Repose - Rest; break

[5] Regular people could enter a feudal relationship with a lord in exchange for protection, but then they'd surrender their freedom…And they might not be safe anyway since the lords were always fighting, and the "regular" people were their foot-soldiers.

quences of the Conquest by Duke William of Normandy.[1] Four generations had not sufficed to blend the hostile blood of the Normans and Anglo-Saxons,[2] or to unite, by common language and mutual interests, two hostile races, one of which still felt the elation of triumph,[3] while the other groaned under all the consequences of defeat. The power had been completely placed in the hands of the Norman nobility, by the event of the battle of Hastings, and it had been used, as our histories assure us, with no moderate hand. The whole race of Saxon princes and nobles had been extirpated[4] or disinherited, with few or no exceptions; nor were the numbers great who possessed land in the country of their fathers, even as proprietors of the second, or of yet inferior classes. The royal policy had long been to weaken, by every means, legal or illegal, the strength of a part of the population which was justly considered as nourishing the most inveterate[5] antipathy[6] to their victor. All the monarchs of the Norman race had shown the most marked predilection[7] for their Norman subjects; the laws of the chase, and many others equally unknown to the milder and more free spirit of the Saxon constitution, had been fixed upon the necks of the subjugated inhabitants, to add weight, as it were, to the feudal chains with which they were loaded.[8] At court, and in the castles of the great nobles, where the pomp and state of a court was emulated[9], Norman-French was the only language employed; in courts of law, the pleadings and judgments were deliv-

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[1] A.K.A. "William the Conqueror," who conquered England at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 (this is one of the most important dates in history—memorize it!).

[2] I'm simplifying, but the Normans were basically French, while the Anglo-Saxons were the indigenous English.

[3] The Normans (who were triumphant in conquering England)

[4] Extirpated - Killed

[5] Inveterate - Long-established; doing something as a habit

[6] Antipathy - Dislike; hostility

[7] Predilection - Preference; bias

[8] Not content with killing the Saxon nobility and/or stripping them of their estates, the Normans have implemented countless laws that favor themselves. For instance, Normans can hunt for pleasure in the large royal forests, but Saxons are strictly forbidden from hunting even for survival.

[9] Emulated - Imitated

were delivered in the same tongue.[1] In short, French was the language of honour, of chivalry, and even of justice, while the far more manly and expressive Anglo-Saxon was abandoned to the use of rustics and hinds[2], who knew no other. Still, however, the necessary intercourse between the lords of the soil, and those oppressed inferior beings by whom that soil was cultivated, occasioned the gradual formation of a dialect, compounded betwixt the French and the Anglo-Saxon, in which they could render themselves mutually intelligible to each other; and from this necessity arose by degrees the structure of our present English language, in which the speech of the victors and the vanquished have been so happily blended together; and which has since been so richly improved by importations from the classical languages, and from those spoken by the southern nations of Europe.

This state of things I have thought it necessary to premise for the information of the general reader, who might be apt to forget, that, although no great historical events, such as war or insurrection, mark the existence of the Anglo-Saxons as a separate people subsequent to the reign of William the Second; yet the great national distinctions betwixt them and their conquerors, the recollection of what they had formerly been, and to what they were now reduced, continued down to the reign of Edward the Third,[3] to keep open the wounds which the Conquest had inflicted, and to maintain a line of separation betwixt the descendants of the victor Normans and the vanquished Saxons.

The sun was setting upon one of the rich grassy glades of that forest, which we have mentioned in the beginning of the chapter.[4] Hundreds of broad-headed, short-stemmed, wide-branched oaks, which had witnessed perhaps the stately march of the Roman soldiery, flung their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious green sward; in some places they were intermingled with beeches, hollies,

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[1] Fun fact: this is where most of the "big" Latin-based words in English come from! When England was conquered, the native words become associated with the poor, lower classes whereas the Latin-based French words were used by the elite. Think "house" (Anglo-Saxon) vs. "mansion" (French). To this day, polysyllabic words are still vaguely remembered as fancier because they came over with the Norman conquerors.

[2] Hinds - Peasants

[3] Edward III ruled from 1327-1377, so Scott is saying the tension between Anglo-Saxons and Normans isn't going anywhere for several hundred years.

[4] History lesson over. Story begins!

and copsewood of various descriptions, so closely as totally to intercept the level beams of the sinking sun; in others they receded from each other, forming those long sweeping vistas, in the intricacy of which the eye delights to lose itself, while imagination considers them as the paths to yet wilder scenes of silvan[1] solitude. Here the red rays of the sun shot a broken and discoloured light, that partially hung upon the shattered boughs and mossy trunks of the trees, and there they illuminated in brilliant patches the portions of turf to which they made their way. A considerable open space, in the midst of this glade, seemed formerly to have been dedicated to the rites of Druidical superstition; for, on the summit of a hillock, so regular as to seem artificial, there still remained part of a circle of rough unhewn stones, of large dimensions. Seven stood upright; the rest had been dislodged from their places, probably by the zeal of some convert to Christianity, and lay, some prostrate near their former site, and others on the side of the hill.[2] One large stone only had found its way to the bottom, and in stopping the course of a small brook, which glided smoothly round the foot of the eminence, gave, by its opposition, a feeble voice of murmur to the placid and elsewhere silent streamlet.

The human figures which completed this landscape, were in number two,[3] partaking, in their dress and appearance, of that wild and rustic character, which belonged to the woodlands of the West-Riding of Yorkshire at that early period. The eldest of these men had a stern, savage, and wild aspect. His garment was of the simplest form imaginable, being a close jacket with sleeves, composed of the tanned skin of some animal, on which the hair had been originally left, but which had been worn off in so many places, that it would have been difficult to distinguish from the patches that remained, to what creature the fur had belonged.[4] This primeval[5] vestment[6] reached from the throat to the knees, and served at once all the usual purposes of body-clothing; there was no wider opening at the collar, than was necessary to admit the

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[1] Silvan - Associated with the forest

[2] Scott's just painting the picture…Beautiful, thickly-wooded English forest… Some standing stones knocked over in the distance, maybe by some Christian convert who associates them with old pagan rituals…

[3] There were two human figures.

[4] Great detail.

[5] Primeval - Practically prehistoric

[6] Vestment - Clothing; garment

passage of the head, from which it may be inferred, that it was put on by slipping it over the head and shoulders, in the manner of a modern shirt, or ancient hauberk[1].[2] Sandals, bound with thongs made of boars' hide, protected the feet, and a roll of thin leather was twined artificially round the legs, and, ascending above the calf, left the knees bare, like those of a Scottish Highlander. To make the jacket sit yet more close to the body, it was gathered at the middle by a broad leathern belt, secured by a brass buckle; to one side of which was attached a sort of scrip[3], and to the other a ram's horn, accoutred with a mouthpiece, for the purpose of blowing. In the same belt was stuck one of those long, broad, sharp-pointed, and two-edged knives, with a buck's-horn handle, which were fabricated in the neighbourhood, and bore even at this early period the name of a Sheffield whittle.[4] The man had no covering upon his head, which was only defended by his own thick hair, matted and twisted together, and scorched by the influence of the sun into a rusty dark-red colour, forming a contrast with the overgrown beard upon his cheeks, which was rather of a yellow or amber hue. One part of his dress only remains, but it is too remarkable to be suppressed; it was a brass ring, resembling a dog's collar, but without any opening, and soldered fast round his neck, so loose as to form no impediment to his breathing, yet so tight as to be incapable of being removed, excepting by the use of the file. On this singular gorget was engraved, in Saxon characters, an inscription of the following purport:—"Gurth, the son of Beowulph, is the born thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood."[5]

Beside the swine-herd, for such was Gurth's occupation,[6] was seated, upon one of the fallen Druidical monuments, a person about ten years younger in appearance, and whose dress, though resembling his companion's in form, was of better materials, and of a more fantastic appearance. His jacket had been stained of a bright purple hue, upon

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[1] Hauberk - Ancient armor that covered the neck and shoulders

[2] Note Scott's conversational tone with the reader. He's a stranger to this time period, too.

[3] Scrip - Small bag or pouch

[4] Allusion to *The Canterbury Tales*, where one of the characters carries a Sheffield whittle (knife).

[5] So this roughly-dressed man is wearing a large brass necklace saying he "belongs" to Cedric of Rotherwood. He's a slave, of sorts.

[6] I dislike how he slips this in here! The roughly dressed man we just spent a page reading about is named "Gurth" and he's a swineherd (pig farmer).

which there had been some attempt to paint grotesque ornaments in different colours. To the jacket he added a short cloak, which scarcely reached half way down his thigh; it was of crimson cloth, though a good deal soiled, lined with bright yellow; and as he could transfer it from one shoulder to the other, or at his pleasure draw it all around him, its width, contrasted with its want of longitude, formed a fantastic piece of drapery. He had thin silver bracelets upon his arms, and on his neck a collar of the same metal bearing the inscription, "Wamba, the son of Witless, is the thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood."[1] This personage had the same sort of sandals with his companion, but instead of the roll of leather thong, his legs were cased in a sort of gaiters, of which one was red and the other yellow. He was provided also with a cap, having around it more than one bell, about the size of those attached to hawks, which jingled as he turned his head to one side or other; and as he seldom remained a minute in the same posture, the sound might be considered as incessant[2].[3] Around the edge of this cap was a stiff bandeau of leather, cut at the top into open work, resembling a coronet[4], while a prolonged bag arose from within it, and fell down on one shoulder like an old-fashioned nightcap, or a jelly-bag, or the head-gear of a modern hussar[5]. It was to this part of the cap that the bells were attached; which circumstance, as well as the shape of his head-dress, and his own half-crazed, half-cunning expression of countenance, sufficiently pointed him out as belonging to the race of domestic clowns or jesters, maintained in the houses of the wealthy, to help away the tedium[6] of those lingering hours which they were obliged to spend within doors. He bore, like his companion, a scrip, attached to his belt, but had neither horn nor knife, being probably considered as belonging to a class whom it is esteemed dangerous to intrust with edge-tools.[7] In place of

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[1] The second man, dressed in nicer and more ridiculous clothes, is named Wamba (pronounced *WAHM-ba*).

[2] Incessant - Excessive in an irritating way

[3] So he's wearing brightly-colored, mismatched clothes, and has a bell on his hat…Enter the jester!

[4] Coronet - Thin crown

[5] Hussar - Hungarian horseman

[6] Tedium - Boredom

[7] Love these little bits of wisdom. Everyone laughs at the jesters, but secretly know that good comedy requires some intelligence. Probably not a good idea to give pointy objects to the intelligent people you ridicule all day…

these, he was equipped with a sword of lath[1], resembling that with which Harlequin[2] operates his wonders upon the modern stage.

The outward appearance of these two men formed scarce a stronger contrast than their look and demeanour. That of the serf, or bondsman, was sad and sullen; his aspect was bent on the ground with an appearance of deep dejection[3], which might be almost construed into apathy[4], had not the fire which occasionally sparkled in his red eye manifested that there slumbered, under the appearance of sullen despondency[5], a sense of oppression, and a disposition to resistance.[6] The looks of Wamba, on the other hand, indicated, as usual with his class, a sort of vacant curiosity, and fidgetty impatience of any posture of repose, together with the utmost self-satisfaction respecting his own situation, and the appearance which he made.[7] The dialogue which they maintained between them, was carried on in Anglo-Saxon, which, as we said before, was universally spoken by the inferior classes, excepting the Norman soldiers, and the immediate personal dependants of the great feudal nobles. But to give their conversation in the original would convey but little information to the modern reader, for whose benefit we beg to offer the following translation:

"The curse of St Withold upon these infernal porkers!" said the swine-herd, after blowing his horn obstreperously, to collect together the scattered herd of swine, which, answering his call with notes equally melodious, made, however, no haste to remove themselves from the luxurious banquet of beech-mast and acorns on which they had fattened, or to forsake the marshy banks of the rivulet[8], where several of them, half plunged in mud, lay stretched at their ease, altogether regardless of the voice of their keeper. "The curse of St Withold upon them and upon me!" said Gurth; "if the two-legged wolf snap not up

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[1] Lath - Thin wood

[2] Harlequin - Stage character

[3] Dejection - Sadness

[4] Apathy - Not possessing emotion

[5] Despondency - Sadness

[6] Gurth the swineherd is sad, but has some fire left in his spirit.

[7] Wamba, on the other hand, seems happy enough.

[8] Rivulet - Small stream

some of them ere[1] nightfall, I am no true man.[2] Here, Fangs! Fangs!" he ejaculated at the top of his voice to a ragged wolfish-looking dog, a sort of lurcher, half mastiff, half greyhound, which ran limping about as if with the purpose of seconding his master in collecting the refractory grunters; but which, in fact, from misapprehension of the swine-herd's signals, ignorance of his own duty, or malice prepense, only drove them hither and thither, and increased the evil which he seemed to design to remedy.[3] "A devil draw the teeth of him," said Gurth, "and the mother of mischief confound the Ranger of the forest, that cuts the foreclaws off our dogs, and makes them unfit for their trade![4] Wamba, up and help me an thou be'st a man; take a turn round the back o' the hill to gain the wind on them; and when thous't got the weather-gage[5], thou mayst drive them before thee as gently as so many innocent lambs."[6]

"Truly," said Wamba, without stirring from the spot, "I have consulted my legs upon this matter, and they are altogether of opinion, that to carry my gay garments through these sloughs, would be an act of unfriendship to my sovereign person and royal wardrobe;[7] wherefore, Gurth, I advise thee to call off Fangs, and leave the herd to their destiny, which, whether they meet with bands of travelling soldiers, or of outlaws, or of wandering pilgrims, can be little else than to be converted into Normans before morning,[8] to thy no small ease and comfort."

"The swine turned Normans to my comfort!" quoth Gurth; "expound that to me, Wamba, for my brain is too dull, and my mind too vexed, to read riddles."

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[1] Ere - Before

[2] The "two-legged wolf" being a thief or Norman. "I swear, somebody's going to take one of these pigs if they don't gather!"

[3] Ha! The dog is running around barking, seemingly trying to help Gurth, but it's just creating more chaos.

[4] Another Norman "forest law" subjected dogs to cruel declawing. The dogs often limped afterward, and Gurth is cursing the Ranger for making Fangs useless.

[5] Weather-gage - Advantageous position

[6] "Come on, Wamba! Be a man and help me round up these pigs."

[7] Hahaha.

[8] "Leave the pigs to their fate. They'll end up in some Norman stomach by tomorrow…"

"Why, how call you those grunting brutes running about on their four legs?" demanded Wamba.

"Swine, fool, swine," said the herd, "every fool knows that."

"And swine is good Saxon," said the Jester; "but how call you the sow when she is flayed, and drawn, and quartered, and hung up by the heels, like a traitor?"

"Pork," answered the swine-herd.[1]

"I am very glad every fool knows that too," said Wamba, "and pork, I think, is good Norman-French; and so when the brute lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the Castle-hall to feast among the nobles; what dost thou think of this, friend Gurth, ha?"[2]

"It is but too true doctrine, friend Wamba, however it got into thy fool's pate[3]."

"Nay, I can tell you more," said Wamba, in the same tone; "there is old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet[4], while he is under the charge of serfs and bondsmen such as thou, but becomes Beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him.[5] Mynheer Calf, too, becomes Monsieur de Veau in the like manner; he is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment."[6]

"By St Dunstan," answered Gurth, "thou speakest but sad truths; little is left to us but the air we breathe, and that appears to have been reserved with much hesitation, solely for the purpose of enabling us to endure the tasks they lay upon our shoulders. The finest and the fattest

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[1] Wamba is making a deep linguistic and philosophical point here! Stick with him.

[2] Remember when we discussed how fancy English words come from Latin via Norman French? Wamba is making the same point. Pigs are "swine" (a Saxon word) when they're dirty and need tending, but they're "pork" (a Norman word) when ready to be enjoyed.

[3] Pate - Head

[4] Epithet - Descriptive title

[5] "Also, Mr. Ox is *Saxon* while he's being taken care of by farmers like you, but he becomes fancy *Mr. Beef* with the Normans…" (This is personification, obviously!).

[6] He continues the analogy with calf and veal.

is for their board; the loveliest is for their couch; the best and bravest supply their foreign masters with soldiers, and whiten distant lands with their bones, leaving few here who have either will or the power to protect the unfortunate Saxon. God's blessing on our master Cedric, he hath done the work of a man in standing in the gap;[1] but Reginald Front-de-Bœuf is coming down to this country in person, and we shall soon see how little Cedric's trouble will avail him.[2]—Here, here," he exclaimed again, raising his voice, "So ho! so ho! well done, Fangs! thou hast them all before thee now, and bring'st them on bravely, lad."

"Gurth," said the Jester, "I know thou thinkest me a fool, or thou wouldst not be so rash in putting thy head into my mouth. One word to Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, or Philip de Malvoisin, that thou hast spoken treason against the Norman,—and thou art but a cast-away swine-herd,—thou wouldst waver on one of these trees as a terror to all evil speakers against dignities."[3]

"Dog, thou wouldst not betray me," said Gurth, "after having led me on to speak so much at disadvantage?"

"Betray thee!" answered the Jester; "no, that were the trick of a wise man; a fool cannot half so well help himself—but soft, whom have we here?" he said, listening to the trampling of several horses which became then audible.

"Never mind whom," answered Gurth, who had now got his herd before him, and, with the aid of Fangs, was driving them down one of the long dim vistas which we have endeavoured to describe.

"Nay, but I must see the riders," answered Wamba; "perhaps they are come from Fairy-land with a message from King Oberon[4]."

"A murrain[5] take thee," rejoined the swine-herd; "wilt thou talk of

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[1] We assumed Gurth was sad because of his state of servitude (a necklace that says "I belong to Cedric" is pretty demeaning). But he actually speaks pretty highly of Cedric, and reserves his harshest condemnations for the Normans. Inverted expectations!

[2] Cedric does his best to stand up to the Normans, but it probably won't amount to much against Reginald Front-de-Bœuf (more about him later).

[3] "You must really trust me, Gurth! If I repeated this conversation, you'd be hanged."

[4] Oberon - A fairy from folklore popularized by Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

[5] Murrain - Plague

such things, while a terrible storm of thunder and lightning is raging within a few miles of us? Hark, how the thunder rumbles! and for summer rain, I never saw such broad downright flat drops fall out of the clouds; the oaks, too, notwithstanding the calm weather, sob and creak with their great boughs as if announcing a tempest. Thou canst play the rational if thou wilt; credit me for once, and let us home ere the storm begins to rage, for the night will be fearful."

Wamba seemed to feel the force of this appeal, and accompanied his companion, who began his journey after catching up a long quarter-staff which lay upon the grass beside him. This second Eumaeus[1] strode hastily down the forest glade, driving before him, with the assistance of Fangs, the whole herd of his inharmonious charge.



[1] Eumaeus - The swineherd and companion of Odysseus

The Preview ends here.

The story doesn't.

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-Erica Abbett