



FRIAR TUCK : SOUL REBEL

“This glorious yarn shows just how much more can be woven around the Sherwood Forest legend. Engaging and appealingly visual, with a sprinkling of historical fact, this tale pitches Robin, Will Scarlett, Alan-a-Dale and a feisty Marion against the uncaring rule of King John and his cruel Sherriff of Nottingham. Redistribution of wealth and general mayhem ensue in scenes strong on action and humour, all under the watchful eye and spiritual guidance of Friar Tuck.” Amazon.co.uk

Join the humorous, brave and wise Friar Tuck fighting for moral courage in the greatest rebellion of all time!

“A rollicking good tale.”

“A jewel of an adventure.”

“Has you laughing and cheering.”

“Very picturesque, and very playful.”

www.friartuckbook.com

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FRIAR TUCK : AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Cameron Taylor is 39, and is an internationally published lyricist. This is his first novel.

Where did your interest in Friar Tuck come from?

“I’ve always been inspired by moral courage. Robin Hood has enthralled audiences down the centuries because, somehow, this outlaw combines might *and* right.

The mystery is: Why did he do good? In the legend, Friar Tuck is the only clue we are given to a moral influence. But this answer raises its own intriguing question: How would a moral guide handle the King of Outlaws? The answers to that make for a fascinating character.”

How did you go about researching him?

“The only facts known about medieval times relate to Church and State. I portray these details accurately in Friar Tuck, but to reveal the essence of the story and characters, I investigated the psycho-history of the legend.

I then superimposed the objective and cultural views of history, like using double exposure to create a vivid picture, and was amazed at the results. For example, no-one has linked Robin Hood’s struggle against King John to the signing of Magna Carta, yet isn’t this objective event exactly what the legend points to?

I also held fascinating discussions with practitioners of several faiths, working out honest responses to the dangers Tuck faces as an outlaw minister. How can you resist merciless oppression with love? How do you inspire thieves to live with honour? In this novel, Tuck finds his answers, and Robin Hood values their worth.”

What role did Friar Tuck play in the story of Robin Hood?

“Friar Tuck teaches the merry men the morality of resistance. He does this by making sure the fight does not become larger than the goal, and that the power and wealth Robin Hood gains from being an outlaw are used to help the downtrodden.

Only the support of the people make it possible for Robin Hood to live as an outlaw. That support existed because the merry men worked for the common good. So, Hood directly gained victory by helping others. This is Tuck’s spiritual

message.

Looking at Tuck's role reveals another mystery to the legend, hidden in plain sight: Why were the merry men, merry? It wasn't all beer and wisecracks. We instinctively know that these outlaws are happy, not high. How did this crew not turn cynical under constant attack? How did they deal with greed? Why are they celebrated as happy and carefree? I think most people would say it is their honest brotherhood. The only character in the story that could possibly inspire this crew to stay honest, is Friar Tuck.

Tuck battles for the spirit of the merry men against the temptations of a lawless life, so that their objective, to free all England from tyranny and poverty, is achieved. Robbery is only the beginning, and only peace is victory."

In the recent movie, Friar Tuck is a comedy character who likes his drink. How does that compare to your knowledge on him?

"I agree Friar Tuck is life-affirming! He enjoys his beer, but he is happy because he loves. Take away the drink, and he is still the same man.

Some of the old ballads show Tuck as a wild party-animal, and some writers have rooted out obscure texts that 'prove' Tuck or Robin were bad characters. The truth is, trusting these sources is like using Sex Pistols lyrics to judge Queen Elizabeth.

The recent movie was a great production, but gave no depth to the characters, which is why most people found it dissatisfying. They treated Friar Tuck as simplistically as possible. The best tellings of Robin Hood show that as well as having a great sense of humour, Tuck is a man of faith. By implication, through fighting on the front lines, Tuck shows that faith is not 'believing in something that can't be proven'. Faith is explored here as the eye of the soul, the human capacity to witness the Divine, even in the teeth of violent injustice."

How do you think your book will change people's perceptions of Friar Tuck?

"In this novel, people will find the jovial, witty, rotund Tuck we all love, but in addition, the roots of his bravery, compassion and wisdom are revealed.

One reader said to me: "Here, at last, Friar Tuck is seen in his true place, at the heart of the merry men, their moral guide and spiritual shield."

In becoming an outlaw, Tuck learns what it means to live in faith, without the comfortable routines of monastic life to support him. Living outside of the King's laws means he must discover for himself the meaning of spiritual laws. This laughing, loving, vulnerable and brave man is inspired in his spiritual realisation by the natural harmony of his forest home, and the acerbic wit of his wild-natured teacher, the hermit of Sherwood.

Tuck works hard to realise the truth in himself. We get to know his temptations and failures, his lucky chances, and how he thinks his way through to effective survival strategies. Readers tell me that this Friar Tuck is the one they've felt they've always known, yet never met."

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