



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 15, 2010

Robin Hood: Parallel to American Power Struggle With Govt

Though it's only May, I have no qualms with the following prediction: Ridley Scott's Robin Hood will be my favorite film of 2010. It captured every element that a good movie requires: a bit of history, patriotism, loyalty, a struggle for freedom, war, and love.

Oscar-winning actor Russell Crowe stars as the legendary Robin Longstride, archer for King Richard the Lionheart (Danny Huston). Longstride dedicates a lifetime of service to Richard I, from the Crusades to war with France. When the King is murdered in battle, however, Longstride ventures off to Nottingham to fulfill the wish of a dead knight. There, he discovers a town that has been crippled by taxation and corruption.



It does not take long for the transition from Robin Longstride to Robin Hood, a name acquired by his use of a hooded disguise in his exploits. Robin and his merry marauders confront the corruption of both the government and the church in the village of Nottingham.

Unfortunately, while Robin Hood and his Merry Men make progress in Nottingham, England is plagued by greater threats from without, specifically a plotted French invasion and the overarching fear of a Spanish invasion, as well as those from within, Englishmen who are angered by the abuse of power at the hands of the newly anointed King John (Oscar Isaac).

In order for England to withstand war with France, the country must be reunited. Robin Hood proves to be the man for the job.

In addition to our strong and powerful epic hero, Robin Hood's love, Maid Marion (Cate Blanchett), proves a beautiful and magnetic heroine. Blanchett's on-screen presence is commanding. Marion assumes the male role of managing 5,000 acres of land, and does so efficiently, while making no reservations about taking up a bow and arrow when necessary. Likewise, there is major chemistry between Blanchett and Crowe accomplished through coyness and furtive glances. Scott leaves the consummation of their relationship to the imagination. Very classy.

For me, English history has always been fascinating and though Robin Hood himself is only a legend, the myth is padded by history. Most historians have concluded that the Robin Hood we have encountered in legend did not exist. By 1300, there were eight men who went by that name, but it seems more than likely that the name was one assumed by outlaws and fugitives: "Robin" as short for robber, and hood in reference to the attire of the Medieval period. It would not be until the 14th and 15th centuries that ballads would begin to romanticize the exploits of a man named Robin Hood who found a love interest in Maid Marion, served King Richard I, and played a role in the Norman Conquest. All of these components are found in Scott's film, with the addition that Robin Hood's father helped to



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construct the Magna Carta — the great charter limiting the power of the King and protecting basic rights that King John eventually signed in 1215 at the insistence of English barons.

Perhaps what has helped the legend of Robin Hood to persist for as long as 700 years is the creation of a hero from such humble beginnings. Also, while some may see Robin Hood as a thief, most appreciate his willingness to stand up to oppressive tyranny and injustice.

A hero like Robin Hood is one that may be welcomed more widely by today's audience. While watching the film, I could not help but draw parallels between the oppressive King John and our federal government. King John robs from the poor to enrich himself and the government-favored elites through the power of taxation and also insists that his subjects meekly succumb to his every demand, without any protest. King John insists that his power is a "Divine Right." On the other hand, the oppressed English insist that *they* are endowed by God with rights and that the King is answerable to them. The similarities to America today are uncanny.

The action sequences are thrilling, and grotesque. If your stomach can handle the sound of a metal sword slicing through the human body, and the sight of a bow cutting through a jugular vein, you will take no issue with the gore of the film. For the most part, I abhor unnecessary violence in film, but in this case, its presence was not obtrusive and seemed to further emphasize the bravery of Robin Hood, Maid Marion, and the noble Englishmen.

Unfortunately, several movie reviewers across the country do not share my sentiments for the film. In fact, Rotten Tomatoes gave the film a sad 46 percent claiming that it is an "oft-told tale [that] offers some fine acting and a few gripping action sequences, but it's missing the thrill of adventure that made Robin Hood a legend in the first place." It doesn't make sense to me that the same people who complain that Robin Hood has been told and retold too many times are also contesting the movie's deviation from the common legend.

I stand by my word. Robin Hood is a must-see.



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