



## Merry Men

*Robert Rodi , Jackie Lewis (Illustrations) , Marissa Louise (Illustrations) , Shari Chankhamma (Illustrator)*

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**Merry Men** Robert Rodi , Jackie Lewis (Illustrations) , Marissa Louise (Illustrations) , Shari Chankhamma (Illustrator)

It's Robin Hood like you've never seen him before, based on scholarly and historical speculation about what's really behind the outlaw's legend.

13th century England. Robert Godwinson, former lover of King Richard, lives with his band of Merry Men in Sherwood Forest, away from the watchful eye of Prince John, who has outlawed homosexuality. Though isolated, the men live in peace—that is, until a stranger enters their camp seeking aid for a nearby town besieged by the Sheriff of Nottingham. Robert—nicknamed Robin—is reluctant to help, but equally eager to get rid of this perplexing stranger... and to put his formidable bow-and-arrow to use. It's Robin Hood like you've never seen him before, based on scholarly speculation about what's really behind the outlaw's legend.

## Merry Men Details

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Author : Robert Rodi , Jackie Lewis (Illustrations) , Marissa Louise (Illustrations) , Shari Chankhamma (Illustrator)

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**Download and Read Free Online Merry Men Robert Rodi , Jackie Lewis (Illustrations) , Marissa Louise (Illustrations) , Shari Chankhamma (Illustrator)**

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## From Reader Review Merry Men for online ebook

### Kristine says

*Merry Men by Robert Rodi is a free NetGalley ebook that I read in late November.*

Openly gay interactions and intimacies among Robin Hood and his Merry Men, though it's very obviously not all about men kissing, killing, or buggering, but about displaying more passion and real emotion about what goes on around them and what happens to their community when it's threatened. There's a muddy, charcoaly palette that turns bright and vibrant in memory (i.e. how they had each met one another in a battlefield or royal court) and ends with a glossary of real-life British men who have a place in history as being gay/queer.

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### Alexa says

This was a really interesting take on the Robin Hood myth, with a cast of gay and bisexual men, as well as a trans woman. I liked the different reactions from the side characters, the dynamics within the Merry Men, and the portrayal of the persecution they had to escape. I also appreciated the short introduction to England's queer history at the end of the volume.

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### Amanda says

An enjoyable read taken from a intriguing concept. I did have difficulty at times telling some of the Merry Men apart, but I suppose that's going to happen when you have a lot of buff dudes with beards in a comic. I would definitely be interested in reading more adventures of this Robin Hood and his Merry Men!

I received a digital ARC from the publisher via Netgalley.

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### Devann says

*I received an ARC copy of this book from NetGalley*

I was sooo excited for this but unfortunately the execution fell kind of flat. I love the idea of a queer Robin Hood and liked how they blended actual historical elements to the story, but this was an incredibly dense read and I struggled to get through it at times. It seemed to alternate wild between deep political intrigue and petty relationship jealousy and honestly neither one of those is my favorite thing ever. I was obviously expecting it to be somewhat focused on politics, but every time one of the Merry Men got jealous because so and so was being nice to someone new and 'omg are you gonna leave me for them????!' like ...how old are you, 15? I liked the general premise and I loved what they did with Scarlet [well, in general, minus the drama] but I feel like the needed to either really cut down on the exposition or else just make it a prose novel. Still a good read but I was expecting a lot more.

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### **Liesl says**

I'm always a sucker for Robin Hood retellings, and this was no exception. I love how Robin's place as being between the margins of society is expanded to include a fascinating look at the UK's queer history (added to with the brilliant postscript of historical queer figures in English history). It works so well and adds an extra edge to the story, with Robin and his friends being persecuted over who they love just to serve a political end, rather than because the religious authorities actually think passages like the one in Leviticus is important. The Merry Men themselves did feel a bit indistinct at times, but that's what happens sometimes with a large ensemble cast in a graphic novel like this one and it didn't take away much from the story. I especially loved Scarlet's story and Alan and Arthur's romance. Guy of Gisbourne also makes a fantastic villain in this incarnation. Can't wait for the next installment!

*Thank you Netgalley for giving me an ARC copy in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **Elaine White says**

**\*\* I WAS GIVEN THIS BOOK FOR MY READING PLEASURE \*\***

Copy received through Netgalley

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Merry Men, by Robert Rodi

★★★★?

152 Pages

Would I read it again?: Yes

Genre: Comic, Graphic Novel, Historical, LGBT

I have to admit, when I first saw the concept for this comic/graphic novel, I was intrigued. I've always thought that Robin Hood and His Merry Men had an MM/LGBT context that no one had uncovered before. And as a conspiracy/history buff, I could smell the hidden story, but didn't have the qualifications to go digging for the proof or historical facts.

Merry Men is beautifully illustrated, and amazingly accurate for the time period. The presentation and the realism of the plot is incredible. I love that there are a full spectrum of characters present – trans, queer, gay, lesbian. There was a bit of a “free love” aspect that was disappointing. I would have liked to have seen at least one solid relationship, where eyes didn't wander and they didn't turn to someone else without thought of the other person. Monogamy this was not.

And while I loved the adventure, the storyline, how it was shown, and all the individual characters, I did feel disappointed to get to the last page and find that it just...stopped. That was it. It introduced “Friar Tuck” as a villain, and the entire story came to an end. There was no mention of this being Volume 1, Issue 1-4 or anything. I find that disappointing. If it had been clearly marked, it could have been a 5 star, because I would have expected the abrupt ending, with the cliffhanger of living to fight another day, but I didn't. So I marked it down to a 4 star. I did appreciate the historical LGBT characters section at the back, though.

I would read more, but even searching for the book online didn't provide any information as to whether there would be further volumes, issues, or if this would be it. So, right now, I'm marking it on the information available which is that this is the end of the story. And I find that confusing and disappointing.

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## **Stephanie says**

I've always *loved* Robin Hood. There's a reason I was pretty desperate to read *Sherwood* when I first learned that it was going to be published. There's simply something so amazing about his story that leaves me with an unshakable feeling of adoration. So, naturally, the very moment I stumbled across *Merry Men* by Robert Rodi and illustrated by Jackie Lewis, Marissa Louise, and Shari Chankhamma I simply knew I needed to read it.

This is a graphic novel reimagining the wonderful character of Robin as the former lover of King Richard and my god, it was brilliant. I adored the story from the very first moment I began reading, fell in love with many of the fantastic characters, and the artwork simply blew me away. My initial reaction to a gay Robin Hood was curiosity and admittedly a bit of worry that the story might not turn out well. But Rodi weaves a magically captivating tale that immediately impresses.

As far as the characters go, I truly have a hard time determining my favorite. Each was wonderfully unique, the names easily recognizable as the beloved men of Robin's merry band. There's a lovely amount of gay representation, naturally, as the men are persecuted for their sexuality by Prince John and there is also trans representation as well. I think, for me, it was truly Little John who stole the show. A quiet, somewhat brooding sort, John is gentle in nature and fiercely protective of his friends. I specifically recall marking out one of his scenes as one of the best parts of the entire novel.

Now, I'll say this for the book, it is pretty dark and does include some rather disturbing events and images. I myself was shocked at the degree of violence I saw from Guy of Gisborne, specifically. This is something to keep in mind when picking up this book, though I will say that blood was kept to a minimum in the actual illustrations. It is perhaps that which made me feel less squeamish about the whole ordeal.

I don't personally feel that this Robin is truly an amazing representation of the character we all know and deeply love, but he is definitely a wonderful character regardless. I did not feel upset at all about his portrayal, but rather see that he doesn't quite match the rambunctious and over-confident character oftentimes portrayed. He's much more cautious than I would have imagined a true Robin. That said, I was quite fond of this graphic novel and would certainly love to have it on my shelf.

With a fantastic plot that leaves you eager for more, I can't wait for the next installment of this wonderfully impressive tale. And this particular graphic novel hasn't even hit shelves yet! *Merry Men* will be available on December 4th of this year and *definitely* one you all should consider getting for your shelf. I know I will.

*I received a free copy of this book via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.*

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## **Max Baker says**

### **Thank You Netgalley for providing me a free review copy in exchange for an honest review**

As interesting as I thought an unabashfully queer Robin Hood telling would be, the execution is severely lacking to the point where I just didn't find myself enjoying the novel. The art style is interesting, and I liked the use of bold and blocky designs. It sort of gave all the merry men as masculine quality to them that I thought was super interesting, but the dialogue was just so dense and dull that there are parts of the novel that are almost unreadable. There seemed to be more of an effort put into political intrigue instead of building characters. So many of the Merry Men are just blended together without any distinct character traits. I think the graphic novel medium hindered the story more than it did to help them. Maybe if it was a regular novel then the story could have been allowed to grow. As it stands, the story is constrained by the medium, putting a focus on the visual aspects instead of using them to help grow an interesting story.

Merry Men is just a boring, dense read. I appreciated the representation of LGBT people, as well as the historical aspects Rodi incorporated. But that's about it.

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## **Alex Sarll says**

Much like Garth Marenghi, Robert Rodi knows writers who use subtext – and they're all cowards. Taking the gay reading of the Robin Hood myth and running with it is not a bad idea: 'merry' as a synonym for 'gay' works, and it does fit with the whole idea of Robin as a companion of Richard the Lionheart. But while bringing Richard's queerness to the fore is a nice fit with history, I'm less comfortable with the way this strives to preserve his baseless reputation for chivalry towards Saracen prisoners, offloading the atrocities on to a Guy of Gisbourne who's pretty much a giggling cliché of a serial killer. Sure, there's always going to be awkward fits when the legend runs into historical realities, but presenting Prince John as using homophobic purges for political advantage...I mean, one of the reasons he was less popular than his equally ghastly brothers was his perceived effeminacy (you know, poncy habits like bathing every month). And if the explanation for the name of Much the Miller's Son is amusing - there's so much of him, and they don't mean he's tall - I was less taken with Will Scarlet being turned into a dead name; wouldn't Marian have been a more obvious candidate for the trans beauty disrupting a hitherto mas4masc band? Ultimately, these are but individual symptoms of a certain underlying clunkiness, and one not helped by art which is at best workaday, and not always anatomically consistent. The climax does have some feats of archery, which are impressive going on ludicrous, but that's overshadowed by a reprise of the Stonewall debate (revolutionary trans woman v assimilationist gay men), which often tends to come across as hamfisted even in art based on the actual incident, where it wasn't hopelessly anachronistic.

(Netgalley ARC)

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## **Chad says**

I thought this was a pretty cool idea. What if Robin Hood's Merry Men were actually truly merry (or gay) men? Unfortunately, this swings back and forth between poor political intrigue and terrible slash fiction with a bunch of adult gay men acting all catty and jealous as if this was a high school drama. The dialogue is stilted and wooden. The writing dull and boring. The book is full of multiple page flashbacks of characters

that are barely even in the story. I'll give this perks for being LGBTQ+, but that's it. This book was just plain awful from an established author with a pretty good body of work.

*Received an advance copy from Oni Press and NetGalley. All thoughts are my own and in no way influenced by the aforementioned*

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### **Chloe Natasha says**

This was so much fun, and a delightful retelling of Robin Hood! Filled with LGBTQ+ representation, this found its way onto my to-read shelf very fast, and whilst it wasn't perfect, I very much enjoyed it.

*With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for granting me an ARC, in exchange for an honest review.*

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### **Marie says**

I received an e-arc over NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Overall I think the idea of the graphic novel is very good and I enjoyed the art style, but I just couldn't get into it. Maybe it was cause with the version I had quite some text was way too small to read and it was hard for me to follow the story. Other than that it was also just not really anything. It had historical elements and then the romantic relationships between the Merry Men in between, but I didn't really care about the story or the characters.

I'd still recommend it to people who enjoy the legend of Robin Hood and are more into that period of history. It's definitely an interesting twist and I would love to see more historic interpretations like this one.

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### **Ije the Devourer of Books says**

This is a really good re-imagining of the story of Robin hood and his band of merry men. The story tells the legend of Robin hood and how he became an outlaw living in Sherwood Forest with the Sheriff of Nottingham seeking to hunt him down and kill him.

In this story the main characters are lgbtq and the story tells how they became outcast and how their sexuality was used to marginalise them and set them up as scapegoats. Robin and his men escape the sheriff's clutches in order to form their own community but danger and conspiracy also lurk in the forest waiting to hunt them down.

I really enjoyed the artwork. The drawings are bright and colourful and the re-telling is imaginative. It would be very enjoyable to have this as a paperback. The only aspect of the book that I am not too keen on is its wordiness. It is very wordy for a graphic novel but given the fact that it is re-telling a story all the prose might be necessary.

In any case this is a lovely graphic novel with good characters, great artwork and some imaginative adventures.

Copy provided via Netgalley in exchange for an unbiased review.

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### **Laura says**

This is not the version of Robin Hood you are used to. And the author makes it very clear in the opening page, what to expect as you read along.

This is the world of Robin Hood and that point in England, during and after the crusades, but with a gay twist. All the Merry Men are sleeping with each other.

And that is central to the plot, as Robin was once lovers with Richard the Lion Hearted.

And the author shows, at the end of the book, how homosexuality was known in those times, and men, at least, engaged in it.

However, be warned, the book is not a gay romp, but has twists and turns, and a lot of palace politics. It is a dense read, and not something to be read quickly, if you want to pick up on everything that is going on.

For me, a little too much hanky-panky, and a bit too much politics.

Thanks to Netgalley for making this book available for an honest review.

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### **Marthese Formosa says**

Thanks to Netgalley for this great read. I had read some single issues from this series but now I could read the first trade from the 'free to read' section.

Merry Men is a queer retelling of Robin Hood. It seems that everyone is Robin's ex! In his merry men band are: Alan and Arthur, Much, Sabib, Kenneth and Little John who have ran away from the Sheriff, Guy of Gisborne and Prince John's reach by taking refuge in the forest, which is considered King Richard's personal territory. It's an interesting story made more so by the arrival of Scarlet.

I liked Scarlet, though she was a bit annoying. I think she hasn't yet understood that while living life as yourself is ideal, not everyone has the same path to it.

There is gay, bi and trans representation. There were some plot twists. Art is nice. I liked the Queer History of England segments very much! I'm curious, the ending introduced another famous character. I also want to know more about Sabib. Yes we know about his backstory but what about a bit about his recent life or his personality? (apart from helpful). Looking forward to more. I thought this was a stand-alone graphic novel but from the ending, it appears not.

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