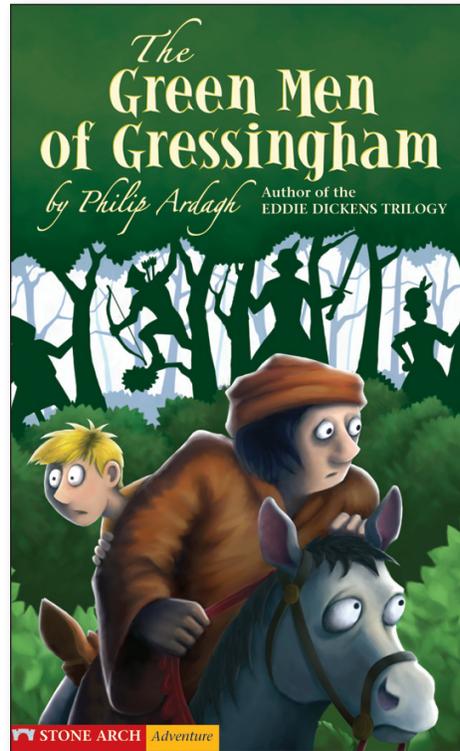




READER'S THEATER



The Green Men of Gressingham by Philip Ardagh

- Characters:**
- Tom Dashwood, a young boy who will learn to be a knight**
 - Able Morris, a man who works for Tom's uncle**
 - Robyn-in-the-hat, a female Robin Hood**
 - Fidget, a nervous outlaw**
 - Friendly**
 - Big Jim, another outlaw**
 - Narrator**
- Genre:** Adventure
- Ages:** 8-11

The Green Men of Gressingham page 1

- Narrator:** Hundreds of years ago, somewhere in England, a man and a boy were riding on a horse together. The sun was bright, and the weather was nice, but the man on the horse looked scared.
- Able:** We will be coming to Gressingham Forest soon, Master Tom. There's a band of outlaws in there.
- Tom:** Real outlaws?
- Able:** Dangerous men, who are enemies of your uncle, Lord Dashwood.
- Narrator:** Able didn't want to worry Tom, but he thought to himself . . .
- Able:** If the outlaws found out I was taking Tom to see Lord Dashwood, who knows what they might do to us.
- Narrator:** Tom was both scared and excited. He had only left his home that morning, and here he was in the middle of an adventure! As they rode on, the forest grew thicker and darker.
- Tom:** Outlaws and robbers won't bother with us. Outlaws only want to attack people with jewels or bags of gold.
- Fidget:** Hoo! Hoo!
- Tom:** That sounded like an owl.
- Able:** Owls don't hoot in the daytime.
- Narrator:** Suddenly, the tallest man Tom had ever seen stepped out from behind a tall tree.
- Big Jim:** We have visitors! Let's welcome them, men!
- Narrator:** All at once, Tom was dragged off the horse and stuffed into a sack.
- Tom:** Hey, you can't do this to me!

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Narrator: The outlaws ignored him. They tied the top of the sack with a rope. It wasn't a bad sack. It wasn't too thick, so there was some light inside. And it wasn't that itchy stuff that makes you want to scratch all the time.

Tom: Let me out!

Narrator: The sack was lifted up. The next moment, Tom was tipped onto the grass.

Tom: Who are you?

Big Jim: We do the asking around here! Who are you?

Tom: My name is Tom Dashwood.

Friendly: So, Lord Dashwood of Dashwood Castle is your uncle?

Tom: Yes. So who are you?

Big Jim: We are the Green Men of Gressingham.

Tom: But your clothes are all brown.

Friendly: It hides the dirt better.

Tom: You need to let me go. I'm on my way to the castle.

Fidget: That's a bad place.

Tom: Maybe for outlaws, but not for good, honest people.

Fidget: When was the last time you were there?

Tom: Well, I've never been there.

Big Jim: So you don't know, then.

Narrator: All at once, a woman in an odd brown hat that covered her face stepped out from behind a bush.

The Green Men of Gressingham page 3

- Robyn:** Not one of you outlaws saw me creeping up on you! I could hear everything you said. What if I'd been a spy for Lord Dashwood?
- Friendly:** But you're not. You're Robyn-in-the-Hat.
- Tom:** Why do you and your men say such bad things about my uncle?
- Robyn:** Dashwood Castle and its lands were once a happy place. But not anymore. The castle's dungeon is full of good, honest people who tried to stand up to your uncle.
- Narrator:** Tom didn't know what to believe. Were these men telling him the truth? Or were they lying? After all, they were outlaws. And then Robyn said . . .
- Robyn:** Tom, we are planning to attack Dashwood Castle and free all the prisoners. But you could help us. Will you?
- Narrator:** Will he? What will happen when Tom meets his uncle, Lord Dashwood? Will Tom end up in the dungeon himself? And what happened to Able Morris? Read further in the adventurous tale of *The Green Men of Gressingham!* And remember . . .
- Friendly:** Brown hides the dirt better!

THE END