



Winning His Spurs (Works of G. A. Henty)

G.A. Henty, Byron Snapp (Foreword)

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Winning His Spurs (Works of G. A. Henty) Details

Date : Published July 1st 2004 by Neeland Media LLC (first published 1882)

ISBN :

Author : G.A. Henty , Byron Snapp (Foreword)

Format : Kindle Edition 174 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Classics, Adventure

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From Reader Review Winning His Spurs (Works of G. A. Henty) for online ebook

David Burchard says

Simple, in the Right Way

This is my first foray into the writings of Henty, "With Lee in Virginia" being my intended next target. Henty is simple in style, and makes quite plain where the plot is going with transparent foreshadowing throughout. But Henty knows how to capture truth, goodness, and beauty. He knows substantive glory. He writes in "The Boy Knight" a tale like that of St. George and the Dragon. This book is a celebration of chivalry, loyalty, valor, and winning the woman upon much hard work. It is a tale to aid boys in becoming courageous men.

The Gatekeeper says

The thing I don't like about G.A. Henty is that he usually seems more interested in teaching history than in writing a good story. In The Dragon and the Raven, for example, he spends a lot more time talking about the battles between the British and Danish people than about the actual plot. For me, at least, that got a little boring. But Winning His Spurs is more balanced; there's still plenty of history, but it's mainly a series of fast-paced adventures in the life of Cuthbert, an exceptionally brave and resourceful young knight. It's a fun, exciting story that I really enjoyed reading. Owing to Henty's formal writing style, it wasn't as engrossing as The Brethren, my favorite book about the crusades, but Winning His Spurs is still worth checking out.

Faith Bradham says

I read this for my Omnibus class and they give intros to each book we read. In their intro they say that Henty has the marvelous gift of writing historical fiction. Ummm, a lot of people have that gift, and Henty is definately not one of my favorites. His heroes are so incredibly perfect that they're annoying (kind of like Elsie Dinsmore) and his prose is a bit stiff.

Rachel says

Fun and very informative tale set in the time of King Richard, Robin Hood and his merry men. And in grand Henty fashion...where else can a young boy gain favor with the King of England, come up with cunning idea's in battle, come back from the war an earl at only 16, take back his castle from a villain, and marry the girl! ;)

Chrystral says

I am learning that I am not a huge Henty fan. (I probably shouldn't have publicly admitted that) I love his desire to inspire young readers in bravery and honor and to teach them history while weaving a fictional thread through it. I just have a hard time following his style of writing. I'm glad I read it, but this may be my last Henty.

Rebecca says

When this adventure begins, Cuthbert is a boy of fifteen living at home with his mother in Norman England. He hears information and is able to warn the outlaws living in the forest, among whom he has relatives, of an impending attack by the Earl of Evesham, who resents their killing his deer without permission. The forest men are reconciled to the Earl, however, when Cuthbert summons their help to rescue the Earl's daughter from a kidnapping by a nearby vindictive Norman nobleman. After Cuthbert participates in the victorious siege of the latter's castle, the Earl of Evesham, who is himself a distant relative of Cuthbert, promises to take him with him when he next rides off to battle.

Neither had any idea that they would be going off to battle so soon. King Richard the Lionhearted was gathering troops to set off on another crusade, and Cuthbert gets to go along, and be a party to major historic events. He witnesses the French and British rivalry, rescues a princess, wins a duel, fights the Moorish pirates, is knighted for saving King Richard's life in a battle, escapes Saracen captivity, visits with a Dead Sea hermit, and returns to Europe with King Richard.

When the Earl of Evesham was mortally wounded, he begged the king that his estates, title and daughter would be granted to Cuthbert. After Cuthbert and his faithful men make their dangerous journey across the snowy Alps and hostile European cities with many narrow escapes, they find themselves rather unwelcome in England. There he leads a Robin Hood style life, and with Robin Hood, no less! They finally see that Cuthbert's mother and fiancée are in safety, and Cuthbert goes with Blondel to discover the place of King Richard's imprisonment, and arrange for his ransom.

This is one of the more exciting Henty adventures, and any lover of Robin Hood will certainly enjoy this tale. Cuthbert's presence of mind and common sense, his loyalty, honesty, valor, and quick wits are all characteristics that make us and his authorities in the book admire and respect him. If it were a movie, you would find yourself holding your breath, but by the time you're halfway through the book, you will be confident that Cuthbert can extricate himself and his friends from any kind of sticky situation. Plus, there is plenty of history and background included, from geography and the baron wars of England, to rivalries on the Crusades, to lifestyles of the Middle East. Find a comfortable seat and enjoy!

Lila Kims says

I didn't really care for the main character all that much, and I suppose I'm not in the mood for so much telling instead of showing, *and* I won't deny that I'm relieved to be finished.

But even if I didn't like it all that much, I do respect this short book. The historical detail, though... :)

Besides, Robin Hood made an appearance. He had no dialogue, and he was only there for about half a page, but... ROBIN HOOD.

So yeah. That was the highlight of the book for me.

Skjam! says

G.A. Henty (1852-1902) was a writer of children's historical fiction, who began his career as an author after a friend heard him telling bedtime stories to his kids. Like many Victorian authors, he's out of favor these days, but my parents found this book at an estate sale.

Cuthbert is fifteen when the story begins, a lad of mixed Norman and Saxon blood during the reign of Richard I (Richard the Lionheart.) This gives him ties to both his late father's cousin, the Earl of Evesham, and his mother's relative, the landless freeman Cnut. Learning that the Earl plans to rid the forest of the landless men, Cuthbert warns them in time, then happily finds a way for the woodsmen to help save the Earl's daughter from his real enemy, the Baron of Wortham.

Recognized for his bravery and cleverness, Cuthbert is made the Earl's squire when a Crusade is called. The noble (in the best sense of the word) lad is quickly noted by King Richard, and soon becomes a knight. Alas, after many adventures the old Earl dies without a male heir, but before he goes convinces Richard to appoint Cuthbert the new Earl of Evesham and the betrothed of the old Earl's lovely daughter.

More adventures later, Cuthbert arrives back in England incognito, to discover that wicked Prince John has appointed one of his unpleasant cronies as Earl and betrothed. Now Cuthbert must defeat the false Earl, save the maiden and find the missing true king. With a little help from Robin Hood and Blondel, he accomplishes all this.

The prose is rather stiff with an antiquated vocabulary—today's children might get the impression that they're reading a book for grown-ups. Those looking for deep characterization are likely to be disappointed. Cuthbert begins the story honest, kind, brave and clever, and remains so throughout. His primary character flaw is that he is, perhaps, just a little too boyishly fond of adventure. When not engaged in battle, even the lowliest of persons is formal of speech.

This is not to say the work is free of moral ambiguity. It's admitted that the Crusades had generally bad results in spite of their lofty purposes, the Muslims have valid reasons for opposing the Crusaders, and King Richard's selfish actions are shown to have negative consequences even while he remains the great hero of the story. Parents reading this with their children may wish to discuss how easily religion can be used as an excuse for war, and the real history of the Crusades.

This book can also be found under the title "Winning His Spurs." It's a good example of children's literature of a bygone age, and with some caveats is suitable as a bedtime story even today. As it's in the public domain, there have been some inexpensive reprints in recent years.

Sarah says

I read this years ago in my early teens. I still love this story.

Heather says

I really liked this book. I haven't read it to the kids yet as I think the subject matter such that they need to be a bit older.

It is well written and fast paced. The main character is someone you can really like and cheer for. Great historical context and would be a great addition to a study of the Crusades. Best used during the middle school/junior high years.

Seth says

I love a lot of G.A. Henty's works. This is one of my favorites, covering a period of time during the crusades. Though a bit stiff in style (Henty died in the early 1900s), the adventure is exciting, the romance palatable, and from what I've read in other sources, the history is relatively accurate. I would suggest this book to history lovers, readers of Verne, Hugo, Conan Doyle, or Turtledove--or someone looking for a good adventure book outside the spectrum of popular fiction.

Jatosion says

its boring beyond beleif. Half life 3 will come out before i finish this book. i pick the book up and put it down instantly. in short its boring as watching to yaks waiting for there paint to dry on their fur.

Elise says

Henty books are always super informative and epic in scope. The language is challenging, especially to read aloud (which is how I have read 2 of the 3 Henty books on my shelf), but it's worth wading through the detail and the dated language to learn a slice of history very well.

I consider Henty's books to be valuable reading/listening for my children.

Amelia says

(This is a "critique" that I wrote as an assignment. I hope it's helpful! It was a good book, just as I said, but not one of my all time favorites...)

Cuthbert, a young boy, aspiring knight, and prodigal page, begins his journey to win his spurs during the crusades and on the way grows to be a man and ultimately saves his country. *Winning His Spurs: A Tale of the Crusades*, first published in 1882 and written by G. A. Henty, is a historical adventure novel set during the Third Crusade. It follows the travels of Cuthbert, from his home in the great forests near Evesham, England, to the Holy City of Jerusalem, and back again. Along the way he has many fantastical adventures, such as rescuing damsels in distress, meeting Robin Hood, fighting pirates, communing with a Dead Sea

hermit, scaling the Alps fraught with avalanches and savage wolves, and becoming enslaved in Jerusalem, to name a few.

The story is written in third person, so we go through the story with no internal access to Cuthbert's thoughts. We know that he is brave, kind, and patriotic, but also brilliant, strategic, and, at fifteen years old, can beat basically anyone in one-on-one combat. This is a lot to say of a character, and in short he is a boy prodigy. The majority of the other characters are also similarly glorified, even Saladin and other disfavored historical figures, with the exception of various rivals of Cuthbert's. This transcendence and lack of much character development causes the reader to be disconnected from the characters; Historical events, not an individual's growth, are the focus of the book.

The plot, so dependent on historical events and details, is crippled by these superficial, lionized characters. Cuthbert's adventures, while not unbelievable by themselves, are cheapened by his extreme 'luck' and his ability to easily get out of the situation with no harm. Often, he was able to run away from his captors while they stand there stupefied, or sneak away while they sleep. This ridiculous escapade is similar to the Adventures of Tintin by Herge or the Swiss Family Robinson, leaving the reader exasperated with the repeatedly unbelievable turn of events (or in this case Cuthbert's impeccable "sagacity") that gets the him out whatever hopeless scrape he is in.

But all that is lacking in the character department is made up for in the setting and the description thereof. For, historical detail and accuracy are something that the G. A. Henty is acclaimed for. His battle and military descriptions are interesting and understandable compared to the confusing jargon of other books, and his story is packed with accounts of medieval town culture and knight chivalry. You are immersed in the history of the Crusades, and every political and cultural anxiety are demonstrated in the plot, which is probably why Cuthbert's exploits are so fantastical- Would a typical crusader experience all of these mishaps, and at the same time receive no more than a few cuts and a banged head or two? Probably not. But along the way the author shows us much more of the landscape and turmoil of the time than if he had followed the path of a typical crusader, which is the author's goal.

Overall the book was very good, an unpretentious adventure story aimed at young to teenage boys. The clear descriptions of medieval warfare and medieval life were robust, and so was the protagonist's strong sense of piety, chivalry and bravery. A message of justice was very faintly present but not very noticeable. *Winning His Spurs: A Tale of the Crusades* was just that; A typical adventure story that was written for the sake of the adventure, not the story. In the end it was a good book, but it was lacking in some areas that prevented it from being a great one.

Alicia Willis says

Winning His Spurs is an amazing book, detailing the life and adventures of a young Saxon/Norman page during the Third Crusade. Usual gallantry, adventure, and chivalry follow the antics of this very courageous and spirited young warrior.

This was the book that first inspired me to write my own medieval series and was the book that made me keep trying to be a good writer - no matter what.

For the most part, historical accuracy predominates the storyline. However, I did catch one or two questionable factors, such as a twenty year old page. However, the few errors were very slight. I would

consider this book one of the most historically accurate medieval tales available.

I loved the storyline. Brave Sir Cuthbert, his lovely fiancee, his friend Cnut, Robin Hood, Prince John, and King Richard the Lionhearted made for an adventurous tale of heroism and war. Venture into the Holy Land and see for yourself the perils of the Third Crusade. Stand for King Richard and honor chivalry in the pages of this must-read!

Highly recommended.
