

## About *THE BAND OF MERRY KIDS*

*The Band of Merry Kids* is a rollicking middle-grade adventure set in the mythical Age of Robin Hood.

Pip is a 12-year-old boy who idolizes Robin Hood and bristles at the injustice he sees around him. He also considers his father a coward — a mere wool merchant who pales in comparison to Robin and his Merry Men. Pip and his two cousins accompany Pip's father to a country fair. Pip makes some new friends — and fights some difficult battles — and it is here with his cousins and friends that he must face the greatest challenge of his life— saving an innocent family from the Sheriff's dungeon. Along the way, Pip also learns a shocking secret about his father.

The Robin Hood legend provides the over-arching morality for *The Band of Merry Kids*, which explores classic topics such as good vs. evil, father-son relationships, loyalty, friendship and bravery in a great historical adventure.

## About DAVID SKUY

**David Skuy** is the author of award-winning books for young readers. His books focus on the issues young people face, and he uses sports as the vehicle to tell their stories. His work has included the Rocket Blues and Undergrounders series of hockey-themed novels, and the Striker series, which focuses on soccer. Skuy lives in Toronto.

## Curriculum

Grade 4, 5, 6 Language (Reading, Writing)

## Student Objectives

After reading *The Band of Merry Kids*, students should be able to:

- Make inferences about texts based on textual evidence
- Draw conclusions based upon implicit information in the text and construct meaning
- Identify literary techniques that help them to understand the text
- Predict and solve unfamiliar words and concepts based on their place in the text
- Explain how elements of the text — narrative, characters, point of view, theme — build upon the text and contribute to a reading of it
- Identify how elements of style — word use, sentence structure, differences in dialogue — help to build upon the narrative and make the text convincing

## Getting Started

- Discuss the legend of Robin Hood, his credo, and identify key players
- Give background information on life in the 12th century

## Discussion Questions / Essay Questions

1. Why does Pip think his father is a coward? (15)
2. Why doesn't Pip like being called little? (19)
3. Compare Aldwin's behavior to Ackerley's in the face of Sir Lanford. Are they being pragmatic, cowardly, or simply acting? (29)
4. Why does Pip believe his father is humiliating himself in front of Sir Landford? (34)
5. What is the significance of Pip's dream? (50)
6. Why does Pip decide to steal food for the villagers? (51)
7. How does Sir Duncan catch the kids in his house? (82)
8. What do Archie and Pip have in common? (93)
9. When Sir Duncan says he has a friend who may be able to help, who does he mean? (113)
10. How does Arabella know how to get inside the prison? (133)

## Discussion Questions

- Discuss the morality of “Steal from the rich, give to the poor.”
- How has Pip grown or changed from the beginning of the book to the end?
- Discuss the traits shared by fathers and sons in the book; in what ways are the sons reflections of their fathers, and in what ways are they individuals?
- How is Pip’s concept of justice different from that of the bailiffs, sheriffs, and knights he meets in the story?
- Does being ‘little Pip’ serve Pip in any way?

## Classroom Activities

- Explore the class system in 12th century England: how does the feudal system disadvantage those from lower classes?
- Draw a map of the Bradford Fair; where did Pip fight Ronald? Where does Archie live? Retrace the kids’ steps.
- Draw what you think the cakes from the fair would look like, and what ingredients they might have.