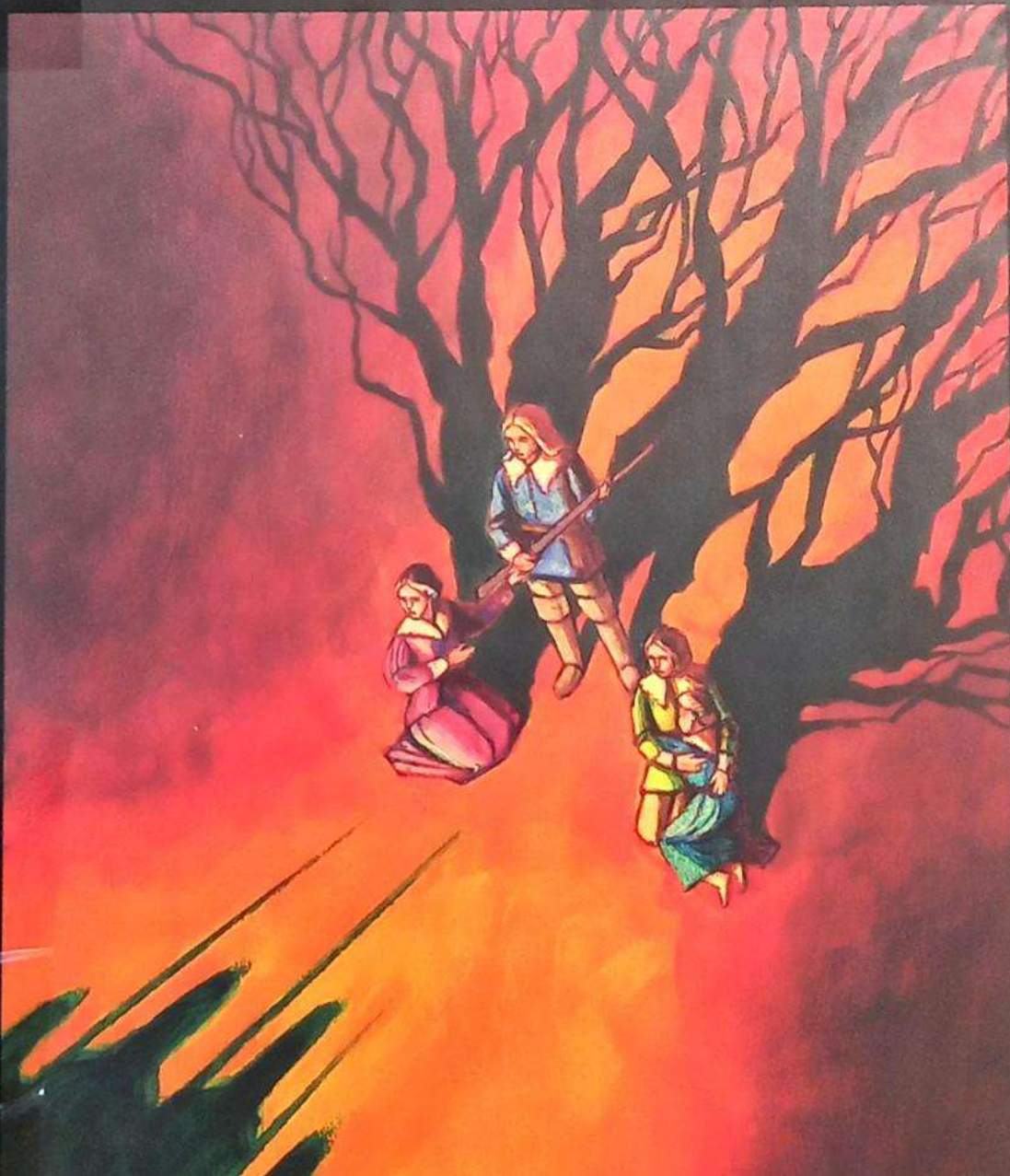


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THE
CHILDREN
OF THE
NEW FOREST

CAPTAIN MARRYAT

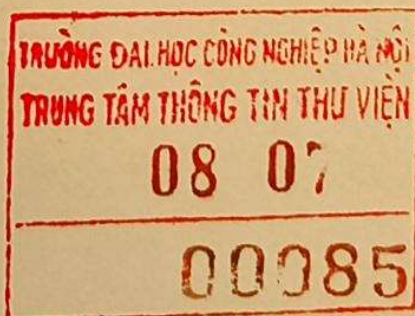


THE CHILDREN OF THE NEW FOREST

It is 1647 and the four Beverley children – Edward, Humphrey, Alice, and little Edith – are in hiding in the New Forest. The King of England is in prison, and there is fighting everywhere in the country – Cromwell’s men against the King’s men. And if you are a friend of the King, you are in great danger.

The children’s father died while fighting for the King, their mother is dead, Cromwell’s soldiers have burnt their home, and they have no money, no food, nothing. But they have one true friend – old Jacob Armitage. So now, with Jacob to help them, they must learn to live off the land – to hunt for meat in the forest, to plant vegetables, to look after the pigs and chickens.

But Cromwell’s men are everywhere, and the children must learn never to say that their name is Beverley . . .





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Human Interest

The Children of the New Forest

Stage 2 (700 headwords)

Retold by
Rowena Akinyemi



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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CAPTAIN MARRYAT

The Children of the New Forest

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Rowena Akinyemi



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1
Escape!

One day in November 1647, Jacob Armitage hurried through the New Forest to the house of Arnwood.

‘You must leave this house immediately,’ he said to Edward Beverley. ‘Come with me to pack your things. You must come to my home and stay there.’

‘But why, Jacob?’ Edward asked the old man. ‘Why?’

‘The King has escaped from his prison at Hampton Court,’ Jacob explained. ‘He’s riding south through the forest, and Cromwell’s soldiers are searching for him. And I’ve just heard a group of soldiers in the forest –



‘The King is riding south through the forest.’

they were talking about Arnwood. They know that your father was the King's friend, and they're planning to burn Arnwood tonight, because they think the King is hiding here.'

'Burn Arnwood! They can't do that! It's *my* house, and I'm staying here!' Edward said angrily. He was fourteen years old, the oldest of the four Beverley children.

The Beverley children lived alone at Arnwood, with an old woman who did the cooking and all the work of the house. Their father, Colonel Beverley, was killed while fighting for King Charles I at Naseby in 1645. Before he left home, he asked Jacob, a poor forester who lived near Arnwood, to look after his family. Jacob knew the family well and was happy to do this. And when the children's mother died a few months later, Jacob came every day to visit the children and to help them.

'My dear boy,' Jacob said, 'remember your sisters and brother. The soldiers will shoot them, or burn them in the house. No, no, you must all come with me.'

In the end, Edward agreed. He and his brother Humphrey, who was twelve, packed their things. Then they put them on Jacob's horse, White Billy, who was waiting outside.

Jacob told Alice, who was eleven, and Edith, who was eight, that they were going to visit his home in the forest. He did not tell them about the soldiers.

‘Edward, here is my key,’ said Jacob quietly. ‘Lock the door of the house, and take my gun from the wall. Don’t leave your brother and sisters. I’ll help the cook to pack her things, and then I’ll follow you.’

The four children left the big house and went into the forest with White Billy. It was five o’clock in the afternoon, and already dark. Jacob helped the cook, who hurried away to her family in Lymington, and then he hid in the trees near the house, and waited.

After a while he heard horses, and the Parliamentary soldiers arrived. Soon they were in the gardens and all round the house. A few minutes later Jacob saw black smoke going up into the sky; then he saw flames at the windows. Arnwood was burning!



*Then Jacob saw flames at the windows.
Arnwood was burning!*