
GREAT ILLUSTRATED CLASSICS

IVANHOE

Sir Walter Scott

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Was He Dead or Was He a Prisoner?

CHAPTER 1

Saxon and Norman Enemies

In the year 1192, the people of England feared for the life of their beloved king, Richard I, also called Richard the Lion-Hearted. Was he dead or was he a prisoner somewhere? He had been returning home from his Crusade in the Holy Land when he disappeared. The Crusades were religious wars being fought in Jerusalem by Christians from all over Europe against Turkish invaders.

Rumors reached England accusing Richard's brother, Prince John, of plotting the king's imprisonment in some foreign country

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so he could rule in his place, which he had been doing during Richard's absence.

Both Richard and John were Plantagenets, the French royal family that was descended from William of Normandy, the king who had conquered England over a hundred years earlier. Even now, many Englishmen, or Saxons as they called themselves, had a fierce hatred for the nobles they called Normans.

On their part, the Normans considered the Saxons beneath them, and they haughtily demanded obedience and respect from them at all times.

In spite of these feelings, many nobles and knights, both Saxon and Norman, had followed Richard on his Crusade. Some had gone because of their Christian beliefs, while others sought military glory or simply had the spirit of adventure.

Two of these knights, both Normans, had recently returned from the Holy Land and were now riding at the head of their party of squires



Two Knights Had Recently Returned.