

WADBOROUGH FOREST



John-John Markstedt

This novel is entirely a work of fiction. The names, characters and incidents portrayed in it are the product of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or events or localities is entirely coincidental.

Revision 1 Edit. November 13, 2022

ISBN 0-000-00000-2

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PREFACE

This is the first out of two external revisions. So—although, I'd appreciate comments regarding grammatical errors, sentence structures and formulations—the focus is intended to be on the consistency of the story, the flow of the writing, the entertainment to the reader, and, most notably, the quality and feasibility of the book.

There will be, if this first one goes well, a second revision, where the focus will solely be on the language.

I've made an effort use British spelling and British words where there are multiple possibilities. E.g. brook over creek, autumn over fall, rubbish over trash.

Notably I've chosen to use whilst and amongst as the conjunction, preposition, adverb, and while solely for the verb. Similarly, I've chosen to use the somewhat increasingly archaic verb form of but.

This story is a satire; therefore, it touches on many ideas and references that is not entirely self contained within this book. It is my wish that the story is in itself self contained(in the same way Animal farm is self contained, albeit very boring if no association to the real world is allowed). However, much of the fun(or value) in reading it comes with the understanding of symbolism and the mockery within it. As part of this first revision, I've noted every outside reference(those that

are intentional at least) made in this work. I do not want to rely on obscure knowledge of trivia however, and those references should not harm the experience of reading—if so, they should be removed. Please note every reference you are able to find—even the ones that are almost too obvious. I’ve divided every outside reference in to three categories. First category: Contains very few but obvious references that I think should be known by 80% of the populace aged 18 or over. Failing to understand these would make a really dull read. Second category: The category that contains most references made, they are not necessary to read the story but understanding a few of them would certainly increase the joy of this book. Third category: This category contains all obscure references. They should be completely passed over with no hiccup, i.e. you’d never guess it’s an reference if not told so. Some of these require some deduction, and I hope that even if they’re found, It’s not obvious that I put it there intentionally.

Perhaps unnecessary remark 1: the chapter quotes are carefully picked and are all relevant to the chapter’s text.

Perhaps unnecessary remark 2: the character names are carefully picked and are all relevant to the story(albeit some more than others).

Enjoy!

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“Some people talk to animals. Not many listen though.
That’s the problem.”

- A.A Milne



DEORDINATION

"Man selects only for his own good; Nature only for that of the being which she tends."

- Charles Darwin

The Wadborough forest is a peculiar collection of trees; it's shaped by an improbable set of circumstance, setting the preconditions of this unlikely tale you're about to read.

The forest has stood where it now stands for millennia, but surrounded by other trees and part of a much larger forest: it did not crave attention, nor require distinction by name. With the ever increasing sophistication—and population growth—of the main British isle, most trees were cut down for timber, and the woodlands were slowly turned to grazed meadows and tiled farmlands. The trees near the little village of Wadborough would most certainly meet the same fate, if it wasn't for a growing posh ritual of high British society. The Duke of Worcestershire—lest he lose pace with his peers—began importing pheasants to be hunted by his guests and his more distinguished subjects. He thus proclaimed that the trees near the Wadborough village would never be cut down, and ever solely be allocated to the hunting of game. These trees became

the Wadborough forest—standing tall and alone in the wild ocean of fields.

Pheasants are clumsy birds—used to roam the Asian steps undisturbed by predators—and found it difficult to survive in the forest. To protect their precious game: the Duke's men drove, over the years, all major predators out of the region. The red fox was first to go (to the chickens' rejoice) as they seemed almost offended by the ease of hunting pheasants. The weasel family: the stoat, the wolverine, and the mink; followed shortly thereafter. The badgers were also hunted, but they soon understood that the pheasants were of limit and began to ignore the foreign bird; thus, a few badgers remained alive. As with all human interventions: they're seldom without unforeseen consequences; the rodent population boomed; which, incidentally attracted more birds of prey to the region. These birds—mostly consisting of various hawks and species of owls—did not danger the life of pheasants; however, they possessed another threat entirely. The ornithologists of the time had a fierce reputation of enacting conservation legislation; the rumor of the birds broad prevalence reached the group and soon they took interest in the forest. The Duke thus had a choice: spare the birds and risk the ornithologists' influence, or kill them and risk the outbreak of rodents; he chose the latter. The rodents did explode in numbers, but they did not carry disease with them, nor overrun the neighbouring fields and the Wadborough village. As a matter of fact—the rodents did not at all conform to the behaviours so often attributed to them. No one could explain why.

Eventually the time of serfdom met its end; and the society slowly morphed into something approaching the appearance of a representative democracy. Ownership of land trans-

ferred from lords and ladies to the establish municipalities, and so too did the ownership of the Wadborough forest. Although hunting remains a tradition of the well-off, its clientele slowly shifted to in time mostly consist of ordinary rural villagers. Innovations in agriculture and growing manufacturing greatly shifted the populace from rural to urban. The growing cities lost touch with the rural arts. Hunting—especially when performed as sport as it is with game—became viewed as cruel and barbaric. The urban population greatly outnumbered its rural counterpart in voting power; activists rallied and tallied support—the Bill of The Wildlife Preservation Act soon passed through the county of Worcestershire; which, incidentally holds the legislative power in Wadborough. The Act contained many a paragraph, but only one concerned the Hunters of Wadborough.

‘A person shall not hunt game birds including but not limited to the Common Pheasant, Grouse, Goose, Turkey, Duck or Pigeon by means of firearm, or any form of projectile, unless bread in captivity under permission from a state licensed breeder (§95b). A person guilty of offense under this Act shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding 5,000 pound sterling.’

- §68, The Wildlife Preservation Act

The Act angered the villagers; “what does city folk know of hunting!?” could be heard at the local drinking holes. Wild conspiracies was liberally spread along with wild guesses on the probabilities of actually getting caught. To the villagers dismay, the city clerks had foreseen their unwillingness to abide by the new law and were ruthlessly prepared to hand out many a salted fine during the first year of the bill’s passing.

And so it came to be that the forest of Wadborough was free of both predator and man alike—undisturbed by the natural checks and balances that keeps the order of things. Even the locks of gold couldn't compare to the beautiful era that would follow.

DEORDINATION

THE END