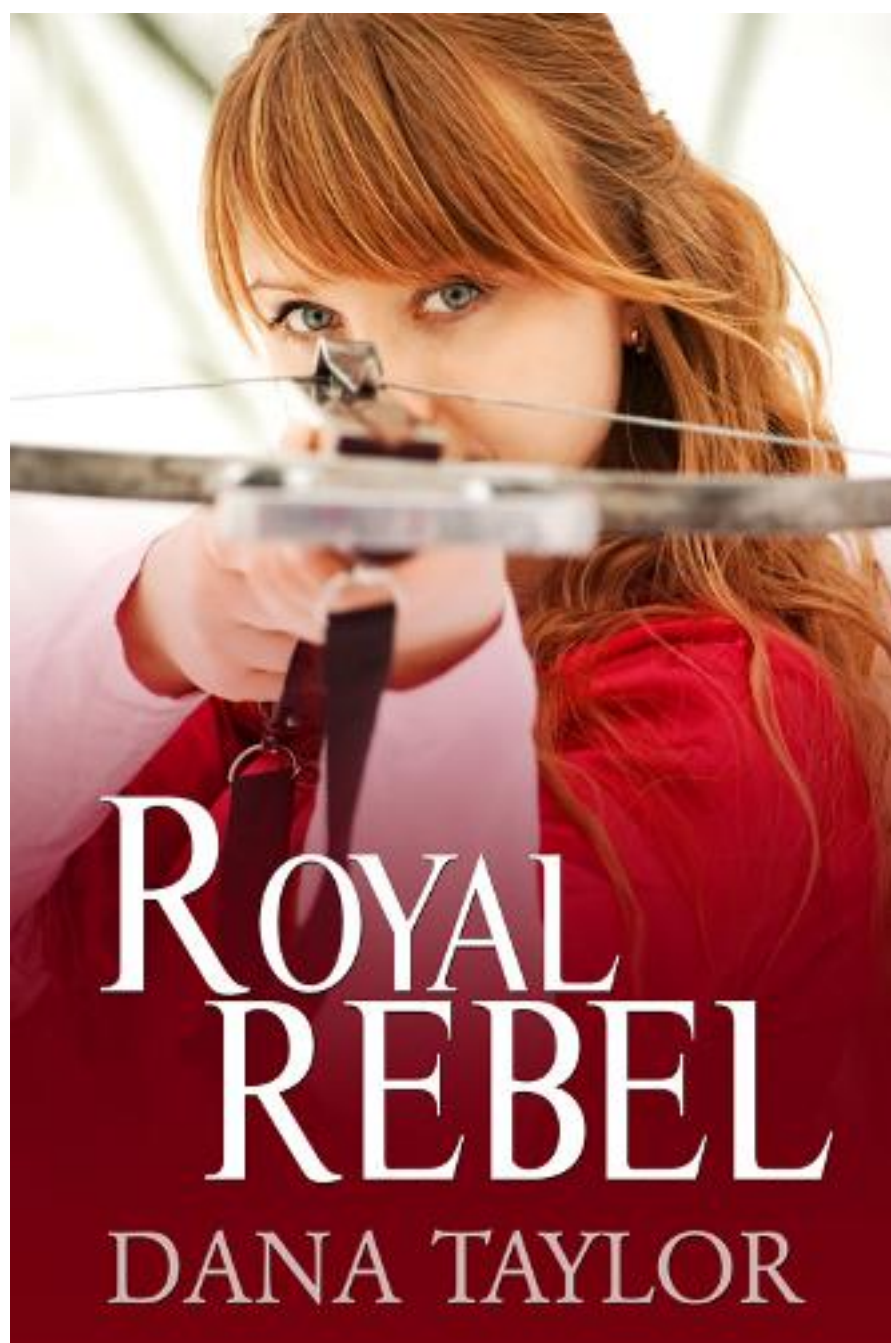




ROYAL REBEL

By
Dana Taylor

Courageous, captivating, cunning—the Royal Rebel leads her band of freedom fighters against the tyranny of Prince John. Inspired by the legend of Robin Hood, *Royal Rebel* twists a familiar tale into a fresh, romantic adventure. Robin, the secret daughter of King Richard, fights injustice as she awaits her father’s return from the Crusades. Joining forces with arrogant knight extraordinaire, Sir Simon of Loxley, the two undertake a mission to save the kingdom. Filled with humor, whimsical imagination, and romance—*Royal Rebel* will capture your heart.

***Winner of “Great Expectations” and “Gotcha” Contests of the Romance Writers
of America***

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Other Books By Dana Taylor
Ain’t Love Grand?
Devil Moon: A Mystic Romance
Shiny Green Shoes
Ever-Flowing Streams

Royal Rebel was previously published as *Princess Robin*

The set-up: Robin and Simon's initial meeting. They've been hiding from Sir Basil the Chancellor entangled in a wardrobe together in the treasure room.

The room was empty.

"The Chancellor left several minutes ago, m'sweet closet mouse." The jester's baritone whisper vibrated against her ear.

With a quick intake of breath and a sudden withdrawal of her arms, Robin shoved his chest with all her might and sent the jester rolling out of the wardrobe. She scrambled out of the enclosure into the chamber. Fury and embarrassment overcame her as she realized she'd been so besotted by this interloper, this clown, that Lord Basil's exit had gone completely unnoticed.

She hissed at the jester as she straightened the dark woolen cloak that covered her shirt and breeches. Her hand pushed wild red hair out of her face. "Fiend! Thief! Bounder!"

The jester laughed, his white teeth shining in his darkly handsome face. His arms crossed over the bright jester's vest. "The wee mouse can speak. So what are you about? Thievery? Murder, perhaps? Were you planning on planting your knife in the heart of our illustrious Chancellor?"

Robin clamped her mouth tight, thinking. Best make the knave think she was about simple theft. She put on her poorest country accent. "I'm 'ere same as you, Sir. Just came to lift a bauble or two from the Prince's treasury. 'E won't miss a trifle and me poor sick mum needs a few coins for bread and such. There's plenty here for the two of us to pinch."

His eyes blinked in surprise. "You think I'm a common thief?"

"Well, ain't ye?"

He hesitated slightly and then smiled. "Of course. A thief, just like you. I must say nothing has pleased my thieving soul as much as stealing a few kisses from you, my little country mouse."

Infuriated by the memory of her closet capitulation, the princess dropped her role-playing. "Stop calling me a mouse, you worthless fop."

He raised one ebony eyebrow and bowed slightly. "Forgive me. Perhaps we should be properly introduced. I am Sir Simon, entertainer to the royalty of the realm. And whom do I have the honor of addressing? "

Robin pursed her lips. She needed to make her escape but daren't reveal the secret passage.

Sir Simon began to make a leisurely circle around her. "Ah, a mystery woman, hm? Or are you using that old feminine ploy of playing hard to get? It's a little late for that now, after our entanglement in the closet." He slid his arm around her shoulder. "Come along, sweetheart, tell me your name and perhaps we can steal away to my room and finish what we started in yon wardrobe. I can't think of a more pleasant way to spend the evening."

Even though his intoxicating scent surrounded her once again, she fought the curious power he had over her and elbowed him hard in the ribs.

"Ooof..." He backed away and rubbed his side.

"Keep your hands off me, Jester. I'm not a scullery wench to be used for your pleasure."

Simon's eyes narrowed and he approached her once again as a cat stalks its prey. "No, I can hear from your speech now that you are not the country mouse I at first mistook you for. You're not just stealing some bauble for your mum here, are you? What is your game, red-headed witch?"

Robin backed away. Her darting gaze lit upon a jewel-handled sword. She grabbed it, swirled about and caught the tip of the blade neatly under Sir Simon's chin.

"Stay perfectly still. I would not hesitate to run this steel through your throat and ruin your warbling singing voice."

Simon leaned back from the sharp end and looked down on his fiery opponent with obvious amusement. "Be careful, Mouse; 'twould be a shame if you cut yourself."

With that, he deftly kicked the sword from her hands, sending it flying across the room. Robin turned instinctively to run, and though she pushed a few obstacles in his path, there was nowhere for her to hide. She was trapped as surely as a bird in a cage. He caught her from behind with his arm about her waist, lifting her in the air as if she were a pouch of feathers. She kicked and squirmed until he hurled her onto the cot against the wall. She lay flat on her back with him straddled above her. He clamped his hands over hers above her head; his superior strength easily

overwhelmed all the fighting spirit in her diminutive body. Oh, how she wished for the might of a warrior.

She bucked in frustration. "Let me go or you'll be sorry."

He smiled a lazy grin. "On the contrary, I'll be very sorry if I *do* let you go. Now where were we? Ah yes. *Your name.*"

His vise-like grip offered no escape, so she feigned capitulation. "Oh, very well. I'll tell you if you'll let me up."

He stared down at her as if weighing her sincerity. She forced herself to relax and sighed in surrender, tucking her head so he could no longer read her eyes.

He smiled smugly and eased his hold. "Now you're being sensible."

Robin scooted away and sat up on the cot, out of his snare. She eyed the door and decided she'd take her chances dashing down the hall and escaping into the shadows. Surely her speed would be an advantage.

"It's...Rumplestilzkin!"

END OF SAMPLE



Available in the Kindle Store at Amazon.com and the [Nook Store](http://NookStore.com) at Barnes & Noble. \$1.99 Coming soon to Smashwords.com

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Dana Taylor writes uplifting stories filled with inspiration and humor. Born and raised in California, she graduated from the University of Redlands. She has been published in various magazines, including the *Ladies Home Journal*. She hosted the Internet radio program *Definitely Dana!* at HealthyLife.net. and won various contests with the Romance Writers of America, including Best First Book from the Desert Quill Awards. Her published works include ROYAL REBEL, AIN'T LOVE GRAND?, SHINY GREEN SHOES, and DEVIL MOON: A MYSTIC ROMANCE. Her latest release is a spiritual memoir entitled EVER-FLOWING STREAMS. Her blogsite is [www. DefinitelyDana.wordpress.com](http://www.DefinitelyDana.wordpress.com). She is a founding member of the on-line community SupernalFriends.com and can be reached at supernalfriends@yahoo.com.