

A JACK CHRISTIE ADVENTURE



DAY OF
DELIVERANCE

JOHNNY O'BRIEN

an extract from:
day of deliverance

by Johnny O'Brien

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from templar publishing

Johnny O'Brien has created the ultimate thinking-boy's hero in Jack Christie. Smart, intuitive and determined to tackle history head-on, we believe that Jack Christie heralds a new wave of fiction for reluctant readers.

Jack and Angus's time-travelling adventures are hotting up again – and the team at Templar are thrilled to be publishing *Day of Deliverance*, the second title in the Jack Christie Adventures. This time, the terrible twosome travel back in time to the grisly execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and are thrown into the Elizabethan world of spies, sword fights and the stage. Making friends with famous characters such as Marlowe and Shakespeare along the way, Jack and Angus must use all their bravery and skill to thwart their enemies and save Queen Elizabeth – and England – from a very uncertain future.

We're really proud of the way that Johnny has brought this period of history to life.

Rachel Williams

Editor

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JOHNNY O'BRIEN

DATE: WEDNESDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 1587.

TIME: 9.45 AM.

LOCATION: FOTHERINGHAY, ENGLAND.

Jack gasped. “The Taurus has dumped us back in 1587 alright...”

Angus looked over the parapet, “But this doesn’t much look like London. No red buses for a start.”

“Right. Maybe that’s why they tried to abort the mission? Maybe the Taurus put us here by mistake... maybe it even split us up and put Tony and Gordon in the right place.”

Angus groaned, “Well what do we do now?”

“Is there a signal?”

“Be serious. Gone.”

They peered into the time phone again. The tell-tale bar that burned bright yellow when there was a time signal was greyed out - dead. The boys knew what that meant. They were stuck and they could not communicate with home. It was unpredictable how long it would stay that way.

“Well that’s great. We’re stuffed. Already.” Angus said, bitterly. “So much for VIGIL.”

“Here, let’s have a look at that readout again.”

Jack studied the readout and pondered its meaning. “Our location - Fotheringhay... and that date...”

Angus cocked his head, “Where is Fotheringhay, anyway?”

“It’s not a hard ‘G’ by the way. It’s a village in England. I think it’s in Cambridgeshire or something. I’m sure this place is famous... but I can’t remember why.”

“Well, we can’t hang around here much longer. I’m freezing my butt off.”

Angus was right. The adrenaline had finally worn off and it was a bitterly cold morning. If it rained again – it might even turn into snow. They needed shelter.

“Down there, I suppose?” Angus nodded towards a small arched oak door built into the tower.

“Probably. I don’t know what choice we have. Judging from that crowd, there seems to be some sort of big event going on in the castle. Maybe it’s a marriage or something. We should be able to sneak out through the crowd.”

“Then what?”

Jack shrugged. “I don’t know. We probably need to try and hide somewhere until we get a time signal and can

communicate with VIGIL. But you're right, we can't stay up here, we'll freeze to death."

The squat wooden door opened onto a dank spiral staircase and the boys started to make their way down. As they descended, occasionally a slit window would give them a view of the large courtyard at the centre of the castle. It was busy. There were tethered horses being tended by servants, breast plated soldiers, and finely attired gentlemen who talked conspiratorially in small groups. Towards one end, a large bonfire was being built and in a corner there was even a gathering of musicians who played a depressing dirge.

"Doesn't sound much like wedding music."

"No – and there seem to be guards or soldiers around, so something's going on."

"And that flag," Jack added, "I'm pretty sure that's the royal flag, so maybe it's a special occasion?"

"A royal visit? Now that would be something to tell Joplin – his goatee would drop out." Angus said.

They pressed on and finally reached the bottom of the tower which opened through a large oak door onto a stone flagged corridor. They followed the corridor and after a while they could hear hushed voices. Ahead was a thick curtain. They looked at each other. There was only one direction for them to go. Angus tweaked open the curtain and they slipped through.

They found themselves to the rear of a dense crowd in a great hall. People seemed to be jostling for position. Something in front was commanding a lot of interest and

the arrival of Jack and Angus went unnoticed. Soon, more people joined the crowd and they felt themselves being pushed further forward into the throng. There was wood smoke in the air from log fires burning in the hall. It mingled with the smell of woollen cloaks – still wet from the early morning rain. With his height, Angus might be able to see what was going on, but Jack could see nothing – just the press of bodies in front of him. He was propelled forward by pushing from behind and then, all of a sudden, he was at the front.

Below a great vaulted roof, a wooden platform had been constructed which was fringed with black material. It looked about twenty feet across and maybe a couple of feet high. It reminded Jack of the stage on which they would be performing Hamlet back at Soonhope, but it didn't seem likely that these people were there to watch a play.

Quite unexpectedly, from one side of the hall three men appeared, walking slowly. They were dressed in fine clothes and they looked important – they could possibly be Lords. The man in front carried a slender white stick. A tall woman walked slowly behind them with her head down. Her brown-auburn hair peaked out from behind a head scarf. She was clad from head to foot in black velvet and a golden cross hung round her neck. As she appeared, the entire hall went silent.

The woman mounted the steps of the dais and walked to a high backed chair which was also draped in black. In front of the chair was a cushion and in front of that a simple wooden block with a half-moon shape cut into its

upper section. The woman sat on the chair and for the first time raised her eyes towards the crowd. Two large powerfully built men stood either side of her. They reminded Jack of Tony and Gordon, but they were dressed entirely in black, and they wore masks. Angus peered at Jack with a quizzical look on his face; he had no idea what was going on. But Jack only needed one glance at what one of the masked men was holding to confirm what he already knew. Both his hands rested on the wooden handle of a large double-headed axe.



HB edition

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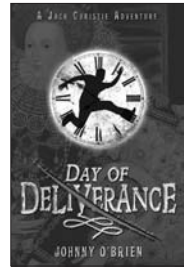
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Day of Deliverance is the second book in the Jack Christie Adventures series, which exploded on to shelves with *Day of the Assassins*.