

Robin Hood

a pantomime

by Jo Smith

Cast List

The Immortals

Queen Fay of the Forest Fairies
Forest elves, pixies and fairies

The Mortals

Robin Hood leader of the outlaw band (*principal boy*)
Little John his second in command
Much Binding one of the band
Friar Tuck a hungry monk
Nun Better genetic sister of Tuck
Mother Hood Robin's mother (*dame*)
Cluff Sheriff of Nottingham
Maid Marion the Sheriff's niece (*principal girl*)
Major Oak Captain of the Sheriff's guard
Sgt Beech a small part of the Sheriff's guard
Private Shrub an even smaller part of the Sheriff's guard
King Richard returning from distant parts
Queen Berengaria his wife
Blondel King Richard's faithful minstrel
Driver of an articulated vehicle
Man with arrow in his head
Pantomime horse
Townfolk, Monks, Nuns, Outlaws, Soldiers, Castle Attendants

List of Scenes

The Prologue Somewhere on the Mediterranean Sea (*Front of Tabs*)

Act I Scene 1 Nottingham, Outside the Castle (*Full Set*)

2a The Fairy Glen in the Forest (*Half Set*)

2b A Room in the Castle (*Front of Tabs*)

3 In Sherwood Forest (*Full Set*)

4a Somewhere on the High Seas (*Front of Tabs*)

4b On the Road to Nottingham (*Half Set*)

5 Inside Nottingham Castle (*Full Set*)

**** INTERVAL ****

The Interlogue At Dover (*Front of Tabs*)

Act II Scene 1 In Sherwood Forest again (*Full Set*)

2a A Dungeon in the Castle (*Half Set*)

2b At Watford Gap (*Front of Tabs*)

3 Nottingham, Outside the Castle again (*Full Set*)

4 Back in the Fairy Glen (*Front of Tabs*)
+ Community Song

5 Inside Nottingham Castle (*Full Set*)

Prologue Somewhere on the Mediterranean Sea (*Front of Tabs*)

(*Enter Blondel SL, singing a lay*)

Blondel Good evening gentle audience (*or* Good afternoon sweet ..)
I come to ask a boon,
I ask that you should sing with me
This very simple tune,
The words may change, we'll rearrange
Them if we really must,
But in this hall we're here to call
For all that's right and just.

So please sing along,
It's a very pretty song
With the words written down in your programmes.

(*Speaks*)

I am Blondel, faithful minstrel to good King Richard of England. My singing has got him out of many a scrape I can tell you. So much so that he thinks I've some sort of supernatural powers, and won't go anywhere or do anything without consulting me! I tell him it's not magic – just talent! But he doesn't believe me.

Anyway, I want you to help me, because I've heard on the minstrel grapevine that wicked Sheriff Cluff is making life miserable for the people of Nottingham – heavy Poll Tax, crippling Own Goal Tax, and worst of all, a tax on the very fabric of society as we know it – yes, a tax on the Archers (*burst of 'The Archers' theme music*) – Thank you, thank you, you've another 800 years to wait for that!

At the moment I'm here with King Richard and his knights on a Mediterranean cruise – well a crusade actually, but you'd hardly notice the difference. I want to get them to return to England and set about sorting out wicked Sheriff Cluff. Will you help me? (*"Yes" from the audience!*)

Right, well King Richard and his Queen, she's a French lady called Berengaria, they'll be passing by here any minute, and when they do I want you all to sing the song with me, but with these words (*words appear*). They're in your programmes too. Shall we have a practice?

(Sings)

I'm told there lives in Nottingham
A sheriff name of Cluff,
Although he's lots of money, seems
He never has enough.
He's soaked the rich, he's soaked the poor,
His infamy is waxing,
The population's up in arms
Because they find him taxing.

So I think King Dick
You should get back quick
And tell Cluff, "That's enough,
Change your programme".

(They try it again. During second time through, King Richard and Queen Berengaria enter SR).

K.R. What's this, my minstrel? Worrying news from Nottingham?

Blondel Indeed my lord. In both County and Forest. There's trouble on the terraces and panic on the pitch.

K.R. A sorry situation! Personally I blame it on the medi-evil times we live in.

Q.B. Dickie, cheri, I think we should go 'ome now and see to this man.

K.R. But we haven't finished our Mediterranean Crusade yet!

Q.B. Oh we can have another Crusade next year. Look, all these people *(indicates audience)* are waiting for the story to begin. Tell the capitaine to turn the boat round.

K.R. *(Exasperated)* Oh, very well. Captain, set a course for Dover. The show must go on! *(Exits SR with Q.Berengaria).*

Blondel *(To audience)* So there you are – it works! I may need you again before long, so don't go away! Meanwhile, let's see what's happening in Nottingham *(Exits as curtains open on Act I Scene 1).*

Act I Scene 1 Nottingham, Outside the Castle *(Full set)*

(The scene opens outside the walls of Nottingham Castle. There are shops, and the chorus is on stage doing shopping).

Song 1 Opening Chorus “Fings ain’t what they used to be”

(Suddenly a person staggers in with an arrow through their head. The arrow has a message attached to it)

Person *(To the audience)* Is there a doctor in the house? I woke up this morning with a terrible headache!

Chorus 1 You don’t need a doctor to tell you what’s wrong with you.

Person I don’t?

Chorus 1 No it’s obvious what’s wrong with you.

Person Is it?

Chorus 1 Yes. *(To the audience)* It’s obvious, isn’t it? (S)he’s drunk too much cider!

Person But I don’t drink cider!

Chorus 2 Why, what do you do with it then?

Person I haven’t touched a drop.

Chorus 3 Well, I reckon it was a Strongbow that did that to you! What an ‘arrowing experience!

Chorus 4 Let’s remove the cause of the sores shall we?

(Business as members of the chorus pull the arrow out)

Chorus 5 There’s a letter wrapped round it. I wonder who it’s from.

Chorus 1 Here, let me see *(Takes the letter and reads out loud)*

“TO SHERIFF CLUFF,
MY SCOUTS TELL ME YOU’VE DONE IT AGAIN. A
SURCHARGE ON SAUSAGES! THIS TIME YOU’VE
TAXED MY PATIENCE TOO FAR.
I SHALL NOT LET THE MATTER REST. MY
COLLEAGUES AND I WILL BE VISITING YOU SOON
TO SEEK SATISFACTION.
R. HOOD”

Chorus 2 Robin Hood and his men!

Chorus 3 But they're outlaws! I'm not sure I fancy being visited by outlaws.

Chorus 4 Better than being visited by in-laws!

Chorus 5 Hang on, there's something written on the other side. It says, "YOU'RE RIGHT, VERY MUCH BETTER!"

Chorus 1 What shall we do with the message?

Chorus 2 Give it to the Sheriff I suppose.

Chorus 3 No fear! He'd probably lock us up in his dungeon.

Chorus 4 And then we'd never be seen again.

Chorus 5 I vote we lose it!

(Sheriff enters UL with Major Oak, Beech & Shrub, and hears this last comment).

Sheriff Lose what?

Chorus 5 Er, nothing Sheriff *(passes note to another Chorus member, who passes it on to another, etc.)* Just, er – loo seat! It's loose – the loo seat's loose – in the loo – and ...

Sheriff Oak! Beech! Seize that letter!

Oak Sah! Sergeant Beech – seize that letter.

Beech Yes, sir. Private Shrub – seize that letter.

(Major Oak is given the letter after much business. It gets torn into several pieces in the process).

Oak *(Presenting the pieces to the Sheriff)* One letter sir, I think.

Sheriff I'll not tolerate this behaviour. Guard that unruly mob while I try to read what this says.

Oak Yes sir! *(to Private Beech)* Beech, guard the mob!

Beech No sooner said than done. Private Shrub – guard the mob!

Shrub What – all by myself?

Beech Silence in the ranks. Just get on with it.

Shrub The mob sir. Yes sir. I'll guard the mob sir. (*Shrub makes an ineffectual effort – he is surrounded by the larger mob members.*)
The mob is being guarded Sergeant!

Oak (*To Sheriff*) The mob is being guarded sir!

Sheriff (*Trying to read the bits of letter*) "SHERIFF, MY SCOUTS
SURCHARGE ON SAUSAGES SHALL SOON SEEK
SATISFACTION" – there's bits missing. Where's the rest, Oak?

Oak (*To Beech*) Where's the rest, Beech?

Beech (*To Shrub*) Where's the rest, Shrub?

Shrub (*To Beech*) That's all we could find, sir.

Beech (*To Oak*) That's all we could find, sir.

Oak (*To Sheriff*) That's all we could find, sir.

Sheriff This looks like the work of that outlaw Hood. Just a minute, here's another piece (*picks a piece up from the ground*). "YOU'RE RIGHT, R. HOOD" Ah, so I was right! Well, when he comes I shall be ready for him. Oak!

Oak Yes sir!

Sheriff Come, we have plans to hatch.

Song 2 Sheriff, Oak, Beech & Shrub "Reviewing the situation"

Sheriff Follow me, Oak. (*Exits UL*).

Oak Yes sir! (*To Beech*) Beech!

Beech Yes sir!

Oak Follow me, Beech.

Beech Yes sir. Beg pardon sir, what about the mob sir?

Oak The mob?

Beech This mob we're supposed to be guarding sir (*indicates the Chorus*).

Oak What about it?

Beech What do you want us to do with it – sir?

Oak Unguard it Beech, unguard it. The Sheriff has said, “Come”, so come!

Beech Yes sir! *(They exit following the Sheriff, however they forget about Shrub, and have to come back for him).*

Chorus 5 Phew! That was a close shave.

Chorus 4 What happened to the rest of the letter?

Chorus 3 *(Female, patting her chest)* I hid it somewhere private!

Chorus 2 Never mind, it'll come out in the wash! *(general hilarity).*

Song 3 Chorus “Seigfried Line”

(Mother Hood enters UR as the Chorus exit).

M.H. Oh, what a nice crowd of people. *(Sees the audience)* Oh and out there too. I do like coming to civilisation once in a while. I live in the forest you know, with my son Robin and his friends. He's sent me to 'case the joint'. Well, that's the sort of language we Hoods use you know! But, sssh! Nobody's supposed to know who I am, so you won't tell anyone will you? Good! Now then, while I'm here I've got to do the shopping, and I've got my list. *(Gets out a very long list).* Let's see now. I wonder which shop I should start in. *(Maid Marion enters UL).* Ah, here's a nice young girl. Perhaps she can tell me. Excuse me dear!

Marion Hello, can I help you?

M.H. I hope so. I want to do some shopping and I'm not familiar with this town. Can you tell me where I can get this lot? *(Shows her the list).*

Marion My goodness – what sort of family have you got?

M.H. A very large one.

Marion Where do you all live?

M.H. Oh, out in the forest. We can't buy things like this in the forest centre you know.

Marion The forest centre? But only outlaws live in the forest centre!

M.H. Yes that's right – *(suddenly realising)* – oh my hoodness no! I mean, not only outlaws. No, there's – er – lots of other folk.

Marion What kind of other folk?

M.H. Well let's see – there's fairies and wood elves and pixies and gnomes and

Marion What other humans?

M.H. Well, there's us – I mean we.

Marion We who?

M.H. We-who-look-after-the-poor-and-needy.

Marion Aha!

M.H. What do you mean – “Aha”?

Marion Someone who lives in the forest, has a large family, gives to the poor and – takes from the rich?

M.H. Oh dear!

Marion Am I right?

M.H. Oh dear, oh dear!

Marion So you must be one of the Hood gang.

M.H. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. I seem to have let the Puss out of the Boot!

(At this, Puss in Boots walks across the stage, to general cries of “Wrong Panto!”, “Puss off”, “Not you again”, etc.)

M.H. *(After order has been restored)* Yes, I'm Mother Hood. They don't all belong to me you understand, only Robin. But they're good lads at heart, and I look after them like they were my own sons.

Marion Well, do you want to know who I am?

M.H. Who are you?

Marion I'm Marion, and I'm the Sheriff's niece.

M.H. The Sheriff's niece? Oh my hoodness, now I'm in trouble!

Marion No you're not, you're in luck!

M.H. Luck?

Marion I happen to think my Uncle and his cronies are the meanest, nastiest most despicable bunch in town. Personally I blame it on the

medi-evil times we live in. In fact, if you'd have me, I'd like to join your band and help you in any way I can!

M.H. Have you? Oh rather! I've always wanted a daughter!

Song 4 Mother Hood and Marion “Getting to know you”

Marion Well, the first thing I can do is to help you with all this shopping. Let's start over here (*They exit SL*).

(*Enter UR Friar Tuck, Nun Better, Little John and Much Binding*)

L.John Robin said to meet him here by the castle wall.

Tuck Yes, but I'm sure we've got time for a small deviation to the delicatessen first.

Nun B Tuck, you never think of anything but your stomach. There are more important things you know!

Much B. And anyway, you can't.

Tuck Why not?

Much B. Because delicatessens haven't been invented yet!

Tuck They haven't?

Much B. No. (*To audience*) Have they? (*Business with the audience, “Oh yes they have”, etc*)

Tuck Then what's this over here, eh? (*He walks over to one of the shops where the sign ‘Delicatessen’ has magically appeared*). Looks like a delicatessen to me. I think I'll just – Tuck in and see what I can find. (*Exits into shop*).

Nun B That's done it. He'll be in there for hours now.

L.John We haven't got hours.

Much B. Well I certainly haven't got mine! And I'm hungry too. (*He goes to enter the shop, but Little John pulls him back*).

L.John Oh no you don't. One malingerer's quite enough. (*Calls into the shop*) Are you coming out Friar, or am I going to have to come in and get you?

(*Friar Tuck comes out of the door with two custard pies in his hands*)

Tuck Now, now. No need to be rude John. I've bought you one as well.

L.John Oh well, that's different! I'm sorry I shouted. Are you going to give it to me then?

Tuck *(To audience)* Shall I give it to him? – “For what we are about to receive!” ...

(Business with the pies: Tuck goes to put it in John's face, but he ducks and Much Binding gets it. Nun Better and Friar Tuck laugh so much they have to support one another, allowing Much Binding to take the other pie and go for the Friar's face. But it gets both the Friar and Nun Better together).

L.John All right, I give in! You three go off to the ale house and clean yourselves up, and I'll wait here for Robin.

Tuck Ale house? Now you're talking!

Song 5 Tuck, Nun, Much and John “Roll out the barrel”

(Tuck, Nun and Much exit SR).

L.John Wait till Robin hears of it! He only took me on because I said I could handle the staff well. It was only later he found out I meant a wooden staff!

(Enter Robin UR)

Robin Hello John, on your own?

L.John Ah Robin, there you are! Yes, I'm afraid the friar's fascination for food got the better of him again, and the others went with him.

Robin Well as it happens it's probably just as well. I've been having a quick look round the walls and I reckon I've found what I was looking for – a secret way into the castle. But only big enough for one person to go in at a time.

L.John You're not going to go in now are you? Alone?

Robin Why not? No time like the present.

L.John You'll get caught for sure. The Sheriff and his men will be on special alert after that note you sent.

Robin Don't worry. I'm as slippery as a fish. I'll just slip in, have a quick look round, and slip out again. No problem.

Robin Hood

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L. John Some fish get caught.

Robin But this fish won't.

(Enter M.H. and Marion)

M.H. Robin! I'm glad I found you. I want you to meet ...

Robin Mother! How many times must I remind you not to recognise me when we're in a public place!

M.H. Ah yes dear, but this is different. Marion here has been helping me, and she wants to ...

Robin Have my autograph? "R. Hood, the great revolutionary band leader", something like that? Really mother!

M.H. *(Mimics)* "Really mother". Listen, I wasn't born yesterday you know. I do still possess most of my own faculties *(hitches up her bust)* even if I do use a bit of assistance sometimes! I have news of great import to divulge to you – but of course you know best.

L. John What news is it mother?

M.H. Oooh! I do like it when he calls me Mother. All six foot something of him, and hardly an ounce of fat!

Robin Mother! The news!

M.H. Pardon me I'm sure. As I was saying before I was so ignominiously interrupted – I've been having a nice little chat to Marion while we've been shopping, and she wants to come and join our little band.

Robin *(To Marion)* You do?

Marion Yes, I do.

Robin Has my mother explained that life in the forest can be rough, tough and, er, inconvenient.

Marion Yes, she's explained all that.

L. John There are no other girls in our band.

Marion There's Nun Better, I'm told.

Robin None better indeed, but he meant *(makes egg-timer shape with his hands in the air)* girls.

Marion That's alright, I'll cope.

L.John And each member of our band has to bring some particular skill or other benefit when they join us. What's yours?

Marion I'm the Sheriff's niece.

(Robin and L.John react – M.H. smiles and nods)

L.John *(Seizes Marion)* A spy!

Robin *(Releases her and takes her arm gently)* I'm not so sure. Tell us more Marion.

M.H. Oh, she's told me everything. How the Sheriff turned them out of their home and how her father ...

Robin Mother! I'm sure Marion would rather tell us herself. But not now – later will do. I'm convinced. Take her back to our camp in the forest with the rest of the band. I have to go fishing in the castle.

Marion Fishing in the castle?

L.John He's going to sneak in the back way and have a look round inside. I think he'll get caught.

Marion But why do that? I can come and go in the castle as I please.

(Stunned silence from the others)

M.H. There! I said she'd help!

Robin Thank you mother. And thank you Marion. Yes indeed, you can be a great help. But – it will be dangerous for you if the Sheriff finds out you're on our side; he'd show you no mercy.

Marion Don't worry. I've known my uncle a long time. I can look after myself with him.

Robin Then let this be the start of a great new partnership. Together we'll beat the beastly Sheriff and rid the townspeople of a tyrant!

Song 6 Robin, Marion, L.John and M.H. “Consider yourself”

Robin Back to Sherwood Forest, and we'll plan our next appearance!

(They exit)

Act I Scene 2a The Fairy Glen in the Forest *(Half Set)*

(Enter SR Queen Fay with Fairies)

- Q. Fay** The mortals seem to think they may
Usurp these forests for their play,
But if they do they'll find that there is
Trouble brewing with the Fairies!
- Fairy 1** I saw one cut an oak tree down!
- Fairy 2** I saw another head for town
With piles of wood stacked on his cart!
- Q. Fay** I know, I've seen the very heart
Ripped from our green environment.
They set the trees on fire, then went
To clear the land for crops and grain.
- Fairy 3** Next year they'll do the same again!
- Fairy 4** And then they shoot poor little deer!
- Fairy 1** And all the rabbits live in fear
In case the hunters come their way!
- Q. Fay** Quite so my dear, I wouldn't say
That mortals show much hope, would you,
With all the nasty things they do?
- Fairy 2** The ones that live here aren't so bad.
- Fairy 3** They still kill animals, that's sad!
- Q. Fay** Enough, enough, I know you're feeling
Mortals aren't at all appealing,
But the question is just how
We can resist them. Here and now
We should agree some way of making
mortals fear the course they're taking.
- Fairy 4** Say the ozone layer's thinning!
- Fairy 1** And the greenhouse thing's beginning!
- Fairy 2** And the polar ice cap's going!

Q. Fay Hold on! I'm afraid you're showing
Quite a lack of mortal knowledge.
When you went to Fairy College
Did they teach you Mortal Hist'ry?

Fairy 3 Yes, but it's an utter myst'ry,
Couldn't make it out one bit!

Q. Fay I'm not surprised. It doesn't fit
With how we fairies all endeavour,
If we can, to plan for ever.
Mortals come and mortals go.
The ones in this age just don't know
Of all the perils you've just listed.
Even though you think them twisted,
They don't have the understanding -
So, it's no use us demanding
Things of them that they can't see.

Fairy 4 What shall we do?

Q. Fay Come join with me,
We'll weave some magic round the wood.
The power of our enchantment should
Protect all those who enter in.
Ready Moth? Then let's begin.

(The Fairies perform a dance before exiting).

(The curtains close at the end)

Act I Scene 2b A Room in the Castle *(Front of Tabs)*

(Enter SL Sheriff Cluff)

Sheriff Oak! Oak! Where are you?

(Oak rushes in from the opposite direction and snaps to attention)

Oak Major Oak here at your service, sah!

Sheriff Good – service is what I need. Where are your comrades in arms?

Oak Sgt Beech and Private Shrub, sir?

Sheriff Sgt Beech and Private Shrub, yes.

Oak They are at the moment on an errand for the General, sir!

Sheriff The General – he’s new here isn’t he?

Oak Sah! He was posted in by Prince John last week.

Sheriff Really. Where from?

Oak I am led to believe he previously commanded a garrison in one of our French possessions, sir. A town by the name of Vaudeville.

Sheriff Vaudeville? Has he come to entertain us?

Oak In a way, sir. The very mention of his name causes great merriment in the ranks.

Sheriff What is this name that causes such mirth?

Oak I’d rather not say, sir.

Sheriff Oh, come on Oak. I am not beyond enjoying a little humour. Why, only last week in the dungeon a prisoner said to me, “Sheriff, what am I in for?”, and I said, “A life of misery I should think!”. Couldn’t stop myself laughing. Odd thing is, he didn’t think it was funny at all! So what’s this name, Oak?

Oak The General, sir?

Sheriff The General, Oak.

Oak The new General, sir?

Sheriff Yes – I’m waiting Oak, and I’m not a patient man.

Oak It’s -

Sheriff Spit it out man!

Oak It’s ... General Thigh-Slapping!

(At each mention of General Thigh-Slapping’s name from now on, everyone on stage should slap their right thigh, in best Principal Boy fashion).

Sheriff *(Looking around him)* Who did that?

Oak It’s what happens, sir. Each time his name is mentioned, everyone in earshot slaps their thigh!

Sheriff Prince John sent him here you say? What does he think this is, a Pantomime? But I digress! I want you and your men to do a little job for me.

Oak Very good, sir. What is the nature of this job?

Sheriff Oh, you'll enjoy it.

Oak We will, sir?

Sheriff You will, Oak, you will. And you are all aptly named for it if I may say so.

Oak Indeed, sir?

Sheriff Oak, Beech and Shrub, yes. I want you to go deep into the forest.

Oak Sherwood Forest, sir?

Sheriff Are there any other forests round here?

Oak But that's full of fairies and wood elves and pixies and gnomes – and outlaws!

Sheriff Outlaws, exactly! I want you to play at copse and robbers! (*Oak looks blank and Sheriff plays to the audience*)

(*Enter SR Beech & Shrub*)

Beech (*To Oak*) You wanted us, sir?

Oak Indeed I did Beech, some time ago.

Beech Yes sir. We were, as you know, on an errand for General... (*Oak puts his hand over Beech's mouth to stop him mentioning the General's name*).

Oak It's all right Beech, we know where you were. (*He takes his hand off Beech's mouth*).

Beech Yes, with General Thigh-Slapping! (*The inevitable happens. Shrub manages to hurt himself slapping his thigh*).

Sheriff Curse the man – he'll have to go!

Beech Who me, sir?

Sheriff No, General – (*he stops himself saying it – Oak puts his hand over Beech's mouth and Beech puts his hand over Shrub's mouth to stop*

them mentioning the General's name). Now listen men. I am about to brief you and the Major here on a particularly important mission.

(Enter SR Marion)

Marion Oh, sorry Uncle. I thought you were alone.

Sheriff Marion my dear, how nice to see you. I'm just giving Oak and Beech some instructions and then I'll be right with you. *(Turns back to Oak and Beech)* Now then, I want you to go into the forest at dawn tomorrow with an armed guard and seek out the lair of the Hood gang.

Oak How do we find it, sir?

Sheriff We have certain information which should lead you there – *(Looks around, and then continues in an inaudible whisper. There is much head-nodding from Oak and Beech. Marion tries to catch what they are saying)*.

Right, fall in! *(Oak, Beech and Shrub get into line and await orders)*
Attention! *(Oak and Beech smartly snap to attention, Shrub is slightly later, as Corporal Jones in Dad's Army)* Is that clearly understood?

Oak *(To Sheriff)* Yes sir! *(To Beech)* Beech?

Beech *(To Oak)* Understood sir, yes sir. *(to Shrub)* Shrub?

Shrub Yes sarge! – What was it again?

Sheriff Right, stand at ease! *(Oak and Beech smartly obey, Shrub is again slightly later)* But I warn you – I will not tolerate failure – either come back with Robin Hood, or don't bother to come back at all! Attention! *(Oak and Beech look at each other nervously, salute to the Sheriff)*. Dismiss!

(Oak and Beech move towards exit SR, Shrub tries to sneak off in the opposite direction – Oak and Beech grab him and carry him off with them).

Sheriff Now, what can I do for my favourite niece?

Marion Your only niece, actually.

Sheriff Yes, but still my favourite for all that.

Marion I wanted to ask a favour.

Sheriff Ask sweet Marion, and if it is in my power to comply, it will be yours.

Marion I'm told you've just had your State Rooms redecorated, and I wondered if I could have a look at them.

Sheriff Such a simple request! I wish all my supplicants were so easy to please. By all means take a look. I shall ask my personal valet to show you round. *(They start to wander off SL)* I think you'll be particularly interested in the gold trimmings which the designer worked into the tapestries of my private bed chamber – only the finest cloth mind you, and specially imported from ... *(as they exit)*.

Act I Scene 3 In Sherwood Forest *(Full Set)*

(Chorus of Outlaws on stage as curtain opens)

Song 7 Chorus “Robin Hood”

(Enter UR Robin, L.John and Much B.)

Robin Now then, my merry men – I'm glad to see you all in such high spirits. We have much work to do today. Little John will call the roll and give you instructions.

(L.John reads names from a scroll)

L.John Right: Adam Artful, Ben Bashful, Carl Carpenter, Dan Draper, ... There's a cart full of gold and silver, stolen by Prince John's men from the people of Derby, moving towards Nottingham today. You are to make sure it arrives empty.

Chorus 1 Well, not quite empty. We'll fill it with stones instead!

L.John Good. You'll be led by Much Binding here. Now: Peter Potter, Robert Roper, Sam Singer, Tom Tanner, ... [etc, etc]

There's a merchant in Mansfield who's too rich for his own good. See that he redistributes his profits back to the townsfolk.

Chorus 2 What's the merchant's name?

L.John That's right.

Chorus 2 Pardon?

L. John His name's Watt – Hieronymus Watt! (*Chorus groans*) I'll be leading that group. And the rest of you will be going with Robin on a special mission to Nottingham Castle itself. (*Gasps from the Chorus*).

Chorus 3 What, right inside?

Robin Right inside. We have a new recruit who should be arriving at any time with the knowledge we need.

Chorus 4 Who is this recruit?

Robin The Sheriff's niece.

Chorus (*Together*) The Sheriff's niece?!

Robin The Sheriff's niece, Marion. She's joining our band here. I hope you'll make her feel welcome.

Chorus 5 How can you be sure she's not working for the Sheriff?

(*Enter SL Mother Hood*)

M.H. Because I say so!

Chorus 6 You say so?

M.H. Yes, I say so! Any objections?

Chorus 6 Well ...

M.H. (*Cutting in*) Objection overruled! What I say goes.

Chorus 7 Sago's a pudding!

Chorus 8 And a pretty yukky one at that.

M.H. Cheeky monkey! Isn't it time you got back into the trees?

L. John Alright, that will do! Let's get off to our tasks now!

Much B. My lot this way. (*They exit UL*)

L. John And my bunch this way. (*They exit DR*)

Robin And I'll call my group when we're ready to go. (*Rest of Chorus exit UR*).

(*To M.H.*) I hope Marion's alright. I expected her to be here by now.

M.H. Tuck was meeting her at the forest edge, so she should be safe enough. Ah look, here they come now!

(Enter UL Tuck and Marion)

Robin *(To Marion)* I'm glad to see you. I was beginning to think you'd got lost.

Tuck Lost? I know the forest like the back of my hand. The lady was a little late getting away, that's all.

Marion I'm sorry. I had to dodge some of my uncle's men. He's sent out a special detachment this morning to find you.

Robin Well I wish them luck. Nobody has found this camp yet without my help. Now Marion, come with me and tell me what you've discovered about the castle. *(They exit UR)*.

Tuck *(To Mother Hood)* Any breakfast left? That journey has made me a bit peckish!

M.H. You've already had an enormous breakfast before you left.

Tuck But that was hours ago!

M.H. The others all seem to manage to do a full day's work without snacks between meals.

Tuck Please – a small sausage, a bit of fried bread?

M.H. You're impossible, you really are. Alright, I'll find you something. Let's see what I've got here.

(Business of Mother Hood getting things out of her bag – but none of them are fit to eat)

M.H. I'm sorry – you'll just have to go hungry for a while. By the way, your sister said, "Don't forget the match".

Tuck The match?

M.H. The Nuns versus Friars charity cricket match.

Tuck Oh my goodness – it had completely slipped my mind. When is it?

M.H. Today. The Nuns should be arriving any minute now.

Tuck Any minute? Oh dear. I'd better get my team together.

M.H. Don't worry, they're here already – limbering up in the nets.

Tuck How could I forget the annual cricket match? The Friars won last year by three wickets, two falls and a submission. The Nuns will be out for revenge!

M.H. Well, if it makes you feel any better, I'll go and get you a snack before it starts. *(Exits SR)*.

(Enter UR Nun Better)

Nun B. Well big brother, is your team ready for the slaughter?

Tuck Little sister, you won't forget the game has rules this year, will you?

Nun B. Rules? Huh! Precious little notice your lot took of the rules last year.

Tuck They were incensed.

Nun B. We were insulted you mean. Anyway enough chat, let's get stuck in. *(Calls UR)* Girls!! *(Enter UR the Nuns' team)*

Tuck *(Looks at them in awe, then calls to UL)* Oh well, come on lads! *(Enter UL the Friars' team)*

(Enter SR Mother Hood with Tuck's 'snack'. She gives it to him, then addresses the teams).

M.H. Now I want a good clean fight. When I say "Break", break. No holding, no kicking, no biting – and may the best team survive! When I ring the bell I want you to come out fighting.

Tuck Just a minute, it's supposed to be cricket.

M.H. Go and eat your snack on the boundary. Whatever it is, it 'aint cricket! Right, Nuns to take guard first. Are you ready?

(A wicket is set up on the stage. Two Nuns appear padded up with bats, helmets, etc. One nun-batsman takes up position in front of this, the other in the aisle of the auditorium. One of the friars is the wicket-keeper, and wears boxing gloves. Mother Hood is the Umpire, and stands at square leg, stage left. She becomes festooned with clothing as the friars move to take up their fielding positions in the hall and on the stage. Spare nuns also take up fielding positions, in order to disrupt the friars. Friar Tuck and Nun Better take up roving positions from which to cause maximum havoc).

Tuck (*Setting his field*) Right, brother Andrew, I want you in the slips; brother Bernard, fine leg (*Bernard inspects his leg in surprise at this compliment, before moving to his position*); brother Christopher, long on (*Christopher moves down the hall*) no, longer ... longer still ... no, I can still see you (*Christopher moves out of the auditorium*) that's better; now the rest of you, sort yourselves out!

M.H. (*To wicket keeper*) What are you wearing boxing gloves for?

W.K. To defend myself.

M.H. Ask a silly question Friar's to fire first. Let battle commence!
First ball please. (*Rings a bell to start the game*).

Commentator

Ball 1

And here comes brother Sam from the refreshment end ... (*describe the strange headgear and the weird windup, and –*) oh dear, brother Sam seems to be in some sort of trouble out there – yes, they're calling for the trainer and I'm afraid that's the last we'll see of him in this match.

The first friar-bowler takes up position in the auditorium. He has on a baseball cap, and winds up as if to throw. After much business he gets stuck in a posing position and has to be helped away again.

M.H. Score one 'no-ball' to the Nuns.

Tuck Just a minute, the ball never left his hand.

M.H. That's what I said, "No ball".

Tuck But that doesn't count.

Nun B Cheating already, little brother? The Umpire's decision is final.

M.H. Next ball please.

Commentator

Ball 2

And now we see friar Freddy storming in – he bowls, and – there's an appeal, the friars are appealing – sister Susie caught in the covers.

The next friar-bowler comes up the auditorium and hurls a sponge ball at the wicket on the stage. The nun-batsman in front of it may or may not hit it – it doesn't matter, because one of

the friars in the auditorium has a duplicate ball, and holds it up saying, “Howzat!”.

M.H. Not out!

Tuck What d’you mean, “Not out”? He caught it fairly and squarely.

M.H. If that’s fair and square, then I’m a Martian. He had it tucked up his habit.

Nun B Come on brother, play it fair!

M.H. Next ball please – ball three.

Commentator

Ball 3

Well, sister Susie seems to have survived so far, let’s see if she can score off this next delivery – it’s a slow one, possibly a googly, possibly – well, what can you say?

This is bowled with a slow overarm action, which sends the ball looping up into the air never to reach the stage.

Nun B No ball!

Tuck No ball? You can’t claim ‘no ball’ every time you’re beaten by our bowler’s skill.

Nun B Skill? That had all the skill of a soggy suet pudding.

Tuck What have you got against suet puddings?

M.H. If you want to argue, do it through the Umpire. Fourth ball please.

Commentator

Ball 4

Another friary delivery coming up from the refreshment end – it’s a bouncer – he’s trying to bowl a maiden over, but the nuns are going for a quick single here – oh dear the friars are all over the place, and sister Samantha makes it safely to the crease.

This is bounced on the floor and hopefully onto the stage. If the batsman can get anywhere near it, she should hit it – but in any case, the nun-batsmen take a single run, swapping places. The friars make a fruitless attempt to get them out, throwing late at the wicket, etc.

M.H. One run to the nun! Next ball please.

Commentator

Ball 5

So now it's sister Samantha to face her first ball – and it's a fast one bowled straight at the wicket, and -

This is bowled straight at the wicket if possible. Again the batsman can hit it if possible, but in any event the wicket keeper knocks the bails off.

W.Keeper Howzat!

Bat But you're not holding the ball.

W.Keeper You were out of your crease.

Bat You're out of your mind! You can't get me out if you haven't got the ball.

Tuck (*To Nun Better*) Oh really! What pathetic excuses you people dream up. It's obvious she was out.

Nun B The ball, brother, where's the ball?

M.H. Last ball please. Nuns lead by two runs to love in the first over.

Tuck I'll show you where the ball is. Brother Gareth! The Swansea special please.

Commentator

Ball 6

I think I sense a change of tactics by the friar's team here – brother Gareth is limbering up, comes lumbering up, and – it's an up-and-under – but sister Samantha is equal to it – she's caught it and started on a run to the goal-line – no (*as she slips it to sister Susie*) she's sold a beautiful dummy to sister Susie, and Susie is racing down the line, jinking, weaving – just a minute, where's the ball gone? The ball seems to have got lost in the melee here – there's friars and nuns all over the pitch – and the spectators are getting involved now too – oh dear, this is just what we didn't want to see

This is a Rugby ball, thrown carefully at the nun-batsman so that she can catch it. She drops her bat, and runs with the ball off the stage and down the aisle. On passing the other batsman, she gives her the ball for her to run with it back onto the stage. The friars converge on her from all quarters, so she stuffs it up her habit and runs through them and back into the auditorium. At this, all the friars start chasing the nuns, "Who's got the ball?", until they have all exited through the auditorium doors.

here in Nottingham today – not a *auditorium doors*.
good advertisement for the game –
**personally, I blame it on the medi-
evil times we live in** – and on this
sorry note, as the players leave the
field in disarray and the Umpire is left
to pick up the pieces, I return you to
the studio.

M.H. (*Left alone on the stage*) Oh well, at least it lasted longer than last
year, and there's been no bloodshed – yet. I suppose I'd better get back to
my cooking. (*She picks up the wickets and any other debris, to exit SL*)

(*Enter Robin and Marion UR*)

Robin You've done well. With your information my men and I should
have no problem in getting to the villain and capturing him.

Marion Can't I come too?

Robin No – you'll be safer here. Besides, I don't want anyone in the
town connecting you with me – yet!

Marion Take care – I wouldn't want to lose you.

Robin Don't worry, I'll see you before nightfall.

Song 8 Marion & Robin “Best years of our lives”

(*Robin exits UL*)

Marion (*Gazing after him*) All the stories were true – he's a wonderful
man. Strong, brave, handsome –

Oh stop it Marion, you're getting soppy. I'll go and see if I can help
Mother Hood. (*Turns to go SL*)

(*Enter Oak, Beech & Shrub, who stop her*).

Oak Aha! Who have we here?

Marion Why, Major Oak! What are you doing here?

Oak I might well ask the same of you, miss.

Marion Well I'm just – er, out walking the dog.

Oak (*Looks around*) Oh dear, he seems to have gone missing. What's

his name?

Marion Er – Major – I mean Captain – I mean General.

Beech Not General as in General Th...

Oak Beech! Quiet!

Beech Yes, sir. Shrub – shut up!

Shrub But I haven't said a word about General Th... *(They silence him)*

Marion N-no. General as in General Dogsboddy.

Oak So! You're out walking your dog, General Dogsboddy, alone in the middle of an impenetrable forest, and he appears to have gone missing.

Marion That's right.

Oak You weren't looking very worried about it.

Marion Oh, I'm sure he'll turn up soon.

Oak And how will you find your way home again?

Marion Oh, I've a good sense of direction.

Oak And I've a good sense of deception. You're not telling me the truth, young lady.

Marion *(Quietly, looking around for help)* Oh, Robin!

Oak What was that? Whose name did you say?

Marion No, it was a bird – over there, look!

(Oak, Beech and Shrub turn to look, and Marion tries to run off – chase round the stage, everyone tries to grab hold of someone, Marion fights off Oak and Beech but she then falls over a winded Shrub and is captured).

Oak Not so fast my beauty! Robin, you said, but I saw no bird. I came to find a Robin myself, but he seems to have flown as well. Beech, Shrub!!

Beech/Shrub Yes, sir!

Oak Guard the lady. We're taking her back to the castle. I fancy her uncle – will be more than interested to learn we found his favourite niece near a Robin's nest! *(They all exit through the auditorium)*

(Enter Mother Hood from SL)

M.H. Oh my hoodness! I saw all that. I'd better get some help and go and find Robin right away. Now, what will bring everyone here quickly? I know, the dinner gong! *(Beats the gong – Nuns and Friars arrive, arguing)*. Will you lot please just shut up and listen to me!

(This has no noticeable effect)

M.H. SHUT UP!

(They all stop arguing, except for Tuck and Nun B who carry on)

Tuck We were not cheating – you were! Just like last year.

Nun B. I don't know where you studied your version of the rules – certainly not at Lord's.

Tuck Well it's obvious the days of Grace aren't here yet as far as your lot are concerned.

Nun B. You've some need to talk! The rules of the game may not be like the ten commandments but ...

M.H. Will you please SHUT UP!! Didn't you hear the gong?

Tuck *(Stops arguing abruptly)* Brothers and sisters, let's get our priorities right! *(To Mother Hood)* What's for lunch?

M.H. Nothing's for lunch. I called you because I need help. The Sheriff's men have captured Marion and they're taking her back to the castle.

Tuck No lunch?

M.H. Not till we get Marion back. Come on, let's follow and head them off.

Tuck On an empty stomach?

M.H. No, on our feet stupid! Let's follow them.

(They go to follow Marion and the soldiers – but first – a song!)

Song 9 Mother Hood and Chorus “Off to see the Sheriff”

(They all march off through the auditorium at the end)

Act I Scene 4a Somewhere on the High Seas (*Front of Tabs*)

(Sound of wind and waves. Enter Blondel, swaying with the ship. He sings)

Blondel I'm standing on the quarterdeck
 And staring at the rain,
 The ship is heaving and my stomach's
 Starting to complain,
 Queen Berengaria they say
 Has taken to her bed,
 The King is not much better -
 He has towels wrapped round his head,
 And I think King Dick
 Really feels so sick
 If he can he'll abandon his programme.

(Speaks)

Oh dear, it's no joke travelling in these old sailing ships you know. I'd like to turn round and go back myself – but my minstrel grapevine tells me things are going from bad to worse in England, and so we'll have to encourage the King to carry on. Look, here he comes now, looking as white as a sheet. Will you help me? Here are the words.

(Enter King Richard, and also the words!)

(Blondel sings, with audience. He and King Richard keep swaying with the ship)

The messages from Nottingham
Are rather less than good,
The Sheriff's got Maid Marion,
He'll soon have Robin Hood.
Unless we get there PDQ
And snuff that Cluff again,
We'll find Prince John will rule OK
And end King Richard's reign.
So I think King Dick
You should get back quick
And not let getting wet change your programme.

K.R. Must I go on, my minstrel?

Blondel 'Fraid so, sire.

K.R. Will this storm never end? I haven't kept a thing down for three days!

Blondel We're all in the same boat, sire!

K.R. Oh spare me the jests minstrel! I can't take much more.

Blondel Is this the Lion-heart of England?

K.R. At the moment I feel more like a Moggie from Moldavia!

Blondel Well the end may be in sight, sire. Isn't that blue sky I see ahead?

K.R. You wouldn't mock a monarch when he's down would you?

Blondel (*Points*) Look for yourself!

K.R. (*Looks*) More magic, my minstrel?

Blondel If you say so, sire.

K.R. I'll go and tell the Queen. (*Exits*)

Blondel (*To audience*) See, it worked again. Good, isn't it? I'll see you later, when we've reached dry land!. (*Exits*)

Act I Scene 4b On the Road to Nottingham (*Half Set*)

(*Enter SR, Marion with Oak, Beech and Shrub*)

Beech (*To Oak*) Sir, the prisoner is protesting.

Marion I am not a prisoner. I've done nothing wrong.

Oak We'll see what the Sheriff has to say about that. I notice your dog still hasn't turned up. What did you say his name was?

Marion Er -

Beech (*Helpfully*) General, sir, as in General Th -

Oak Beech! Shut up!

Beech Yes sir, sorry sir.

Shrub Oh yes, we mustn't say general Th...

Beech (*Putting his hand over Shrub's mouth*) Shut up, Shrub.

Oak Poor General seems to be a lost dog.

Marion Oh – he'll find his own way home.

Oak I'm sure he will – and we'll be there to meet him, at the castle.
Come on, we're nearly there. Beech!

Beech Sir!

Oak Bring up the rear.

Beech Message received, sir. Shrub! Fall in at the rear!

Shrub (*Looks behind him*) Beg pardon sir?

Beech The rear, Shrub – the back, the behind, the tail end. Do I make myself clear?

Shrub Clear sir (*stands upstage of the group*). Here sir?

Beech No you ass, I mean – never mind.

(Oak puts Shrub in the right place, holding Marion which he does gingerly. Marion smiles at Shrub and he grins back)

Oak Let's just get to Nottingham. To the castle, quick march! (*All exit SL*).

(Enter SR, Mother Hood alone)

M.H. Oh dear. After I'd gone to all that trouble to bang the gong for help, all they wanted was to eat their dinner. So I'm here on my own, deep in the forest, trying to find those ruffians who took Marion away. Have you seen them? (*Audience respond*).

Which way did they go? (*Audience respond*).

This way? (*Audience respond*).

Ooh, it's ever so spooky here – I don't like it at all. (*Lights start to dim*). Didn't I see that tree move then? And that one! And – what's that!!

(Lights dim further, spooky music, trees move, owls and bats, etc appear and dance round Mother Hood, who stands as if petrified).

(At the end, Queen Fay enters SR in a white spot with an elf or two, and the creatures scatter).

M.H. Who are you?

Q. Fay I am Queen Fay, I rule this wood,
I stand for all that's right and good.
My forest elves have followed you,
And all the other mortals too,
To see you safely from our land.

M.H. Cor Blimey!

Q. Fay So you understand
I'll not take sides in your dispute.
If you decide to shoot and loot
Outside this wood, that's your affair,
But if you do it here, beware!

M.H. But my son Rob ...

Q. Fay Dear Mother Hood,
I know you well. I think you should
Take sides against the rude and vile;
But please remember, even while
Your villain meets his Waterloo
There's others have to live here too.

M.H. What's Waterloo?

Q. Fay You'll see in time.
Now, train your sights along the line
Of how to leave us here in peace.

M.H. I will, your fairyship.

Q. Fay I'll lease
You one small elf to see you through;
Come Fungus dear, I think you'll do.
Escort this lady to the fence
And leave her where the wood's less dense,
So she can find her way to town.

Elf I will, your majesty.

Q. Fay *(To Mother Hood)* Don't frown!
I'm sure this tale will turn out fine -
It always does in Pantomime!

(Exit SL Mother Hood and the elf)

(Sighs) Ah well, we'll see what we shall see -
I think I'll have a cup of tea!

Song 10 Queen Fay “Nice cup of tea”

(Exits at end, SR)

Act I Scene 5 Inside the Castle *(Full Set)*

(Chorus of Castle Attendants on stage as curtain opens)

Song 11 Chorus “Holding out for a hero”

(Enter DR Oak, Beech, Shrub and Marion)

Oak *(To chorus)* Turn off that noise and summon the Sheriff – we have news for him!

Chorus 1 Why, it's Marion. What's happened?

Oak None of your business! Call the Sheriff, and then be off about your duties!

(Chorus exits).

Beech Can we release the prisoner now, sir?

Oak Yes, you can release her, Beech.

Beech Shrub, release the prisoner. Let go of her, can't you?

Shrub Must I, Sarge? *(He releases her and waves her goodbye)*

Oak Stupid boy! She'll not escape here.

Marion Why should I want to? I was here only yesterday as a guest of my uncle.

Oak I think he'll see things differently now.

(Enter UL the Sheriff)

Sheriff Who'll see things differently? Why, Marion – back so soon?

Oak We have apprehended your niece, sir, close to the last reported whereabouts of the Hood gang.

Sheriff In the forest?

Oak Deep in the forest, sir.

Sheriff (*To Marion*) What on earth were you doing there?

Oak She says she was walking her dog, sir.

Sheriff (*To Marion*) But you haven't got a dog.

Oak She claims, sir, to have a dog by the name of General Dogsbody.

Sheriff What, General as in General Th ...

Oak (*Quickly*) Yes, quite sir.

Sheriff What have you got to say to this Marion? Have you betrayed my trust? I am a good friend, but a very bad enemy as your father found out. Why were you in the forest?

Marion It's none of your business!

Sheriff None of my business?. Why you insolent young girl! Everything around here is my business. Oak!

Oak Sir!

Sheriff Throw her into the dungeon to cool off for a while. (*To Marion*) Perhaps tomorrow you'll have a better tale to tell, with a bit of *gentle* persuasion!. (*Sheriff exits UL*).

Oak Beech, convey the prisoner to the dungeon!

Beech Very good, sir. Shrub, convey the prisoner to the dungeon.

Shrub Yes sir. Er, which dungeon, sir?

Beech The deep dungeon, Shrub.

Oak The deepest dungeon, Shrub. The one at the bottom – I assume you know where the bottom is. (*To Marion*) I'll visit you later, you little bird watcher!

(*Shrub and Marion exit UR; Oak & Beech exit UL*).

(*Enter DL Mother Hood*)

M.H. Well, I'm here! That nice little elf took me right to the edge of the forest, and showed me the road to Nottingham. And when I got to the castle, guess what I saw? (*Holds up a sign saying "STAFF*

VACANCIES”). So I’m applying for the post of Chief Cook & Bottle Washer, and they tell me I have to wait in here for an interview. Oh, someone’s coming now!

(Enter UL the Sheriff)

Sheriff So you’re the candidate for Chief Cook & Bottle Washer are you?

M.H. That’s right, your Sheriffship.

Sheriff Take a seat. *(He sits behind a desk, and she draws up a seat opposite him).* This is a very important post in the castle. What qualifications have you got?

M.H. Oh, I’ve been cooking and bottle washing now for more years than I care to remember.

Sheriff Have you got any references? Where have you been working before?

M.H. For a local – er, band.

Sheriff Musicians?

M.H. Well, they each have a part to play, and they settle the score between them.

Sheriff I don’t follow.

M.H. *(Aside)* Just as well probably! *(To the Sheriff)* It’s a large family enterprise on the, er, outskirts of the city.

Sheriff What’s the business of this enterprise?

M.H. Oh, funds transfer mainly. Pretty boring stuff, you wouldn’t be interested in the details – I don’t understand much about it myself – I just do the cooking, and – bottle washing.

Sheriff And how many people do you cater for?

M.H. Oh it varies. Sometimes one or two, and sometimes scores of them. It all depends whether they’re, er, on the road or in the, er, office.

Sheriff And they enjoy their food?

M.H. Tuck in, yes! And the rest have what’s left.

Sheriff Pardon?

M.H. Oh nothing. Just a little in-joke!

Sheriff A tuck-in joke?

M.H. Tuck-in, yes (*laughs*). Silly me!

Sheriff Well I admit we're desperate to fill this vacancy. The last person left suddenly.

M.H. Oh dear. A health problem?

Sheriff You could say that – she ate a poisoned portion intended for me. When can you start?

M.H. When do you want your next meal?

Sheriff Supper is at eight. I'll get someone to show you to the kitchen. (*Exits UR*).

M.H. Looks like I've got it! As soon as I've settled in I'll see if I can find Marion.

(*Robin pops his head round the corner DR*)

Robin Pssst!

M.H. What's that, a gas leak?

Robin Psst, Mother!

M.H. Robin, what are you doing here?

Robin I could ask you the same thing!

M.H. I am the new Chief Cook & Bottle Washer for the castle.

Robin You?!!

M.H. Me!

Robin How?

M.H. I applied for the vacancy, and I've just been accepted for the post. Personal interview by the Sheriff no less.

Robin Why?

M.H. I suppose he wants to make sure ...

Robin No – why did you want a job here?

M.H. So that I could rescue Marion.

Robin Marion! Is she here?

M.H. Oh my hoodness, of course you didn't know that! The Sheriff's men came and seized her after you'd gone.

Robin Where is she?

M.H. I don't know yet – that's what I want to find out. Someone's coming! You'd better make yourself scarce. *(Robin exits DR again).*

(Enter UR Beech)

Beech Ah, there you are Madam. If you would kindly follow me, I'll show you to the kitchen.

M.H. That's most kind of you my man. Will you bring my bags?
(Business of Beech trying to pick up heavy bags. They finally exit UR).

(Enter Robin from DR again)

Robin So, Cluff's caught Marion. I must free her before he has his evil way with her. But I'll need to summon some help. Let me think -- I know! I need ink and paper.

(An arm appears holding paper, an inkwell and quill. Robin speaks as he writes) "COME TO CASTLE WITH ALL HASTE+STOP+

MARION CAPTURED+STOP+

MEET ME AT THE SECRET ENTRANCE+STOP+

ROBIN"

(He ties the message to an arrow, and fits it to his bow) O trusty bow, send this message deep into the forest where my men will find it.

(He fires the arrow in the air – it comes to earth we know not where!)
Now to wait by the secret entrance for my men – then we'll see how the Sheriff's men like a good fight! *(Robin exits DR again).*

(Enter UR Mother Hood and Beech)

M.H. Now then, Private Beech, you've been told to help me – is that right?

Beech That is correct, sir! I mean Ma'am.

M.H. Good. Well you can start by peeling the potatoes, then you can chop the cabbage, strip the sprouts, pod the peas, cut the kale, and when

Robin Hood

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you've finished doing that -

Beech Yes, ma'am.

M.H. You can do the washing up!

Beech Very good, ma'am.

M.H. That will be all for now, thank you Beech – run along.

Beech Permission to speak, ma'am?

M.H. Oh you silly boy, you don't need to ask my permission to speak.
I'm not one of your Major Oaks or General – what's his name?

Beech The General ma'am?

M.H. Yes, you were telling me about him. Said he had a peculiar name.

Beech It's – General Thigh-Slapping (*the inevitable happens again*),
ma'am!

M.H. Good heavens, did you do that?

Beech In a manner of speaking, ma'am, yes.

M.H. Well don't do it again, you naughty boy. At least, only when I ask
you to. Now what was it you wanted to say?

Beech I've never peeled a potato in my life, ma'am.

M.H. Well now's your chance to learn.

Beech Yes, ma'am.

(Enter UL the Sheriff and Major Oak)

Sheriff Ah there you are Beech. Change of orders – you're to help us
interrogate the prisoner.

Beech Sir! But I was detailed to help in the kitchen.

Oak That will have to wait, Beech. These orders come from the very
top.

Beech What, from General Th -

Oak Beech! Yes, from the General.

M.H. Well I like that! First I get help and then I don't. You just wait till
I get to see this General (*all on stage perform the following actions*)

Head-Bashing, Arm-Waving, Back-Aching, Knee-Jerking, what's his name?

Sheriff

Oak *(together)* Thigh-Slapping!

Beech

(They all do this too, by which time everyone is exhausted).

M.H. You wait till I see him – I'll give him a piece of my mind!

Sheriff We're wasting time. Oak, Beech, to the dungeons!

Song 12 Sheriff, Oak , Beech & Shrub *just some music to depart by...*

(At the end, they exit UL).

M.H. Huh! Oh well, I suppose I'd better start peeling two hundred potatoes myself!

(Enter the Chorus of castle attendants)

Chorus 1 Two hundred potatoes? You can't do that all by yourself!

Chorus 2 Trust the rotten old Sheriff to think interrogating a prisoner was more important than getting dinners ready.

Chorus 3 Come on, we'll help you. That way it'll soon get done.

M.H. Oh aren't you all kind! That's just the sort of help I need! The sooner I can get this finished, the sooner I can get on with my other chores.

Chorus 4 What chores?

M.H. What's mine? A large gin and tonic please!

Song 13 Mother Hood and Chorus "Nine to five"

M.H. Right, let's get on with it! *(To audience)* Enjoy your coffee while we're slaving away up here, won't you. See you after the interval!

(The curtain falls)

*** INTERVAL ***

The Interlogue At Dover (*Front of Tabs*)

(*Enter Blondel singing*)

Blondel We've just arrived at Dover, and
We're stood on solid ground,
The King and Queen were overjoyed,
Until our driver found
The way to London jammed with carts,
There's really no way through.
It looks as though we're stuck until
They build the new M2.
And I think King Dick
Thinks the jam's so thick
If he can he'll abandon his programme.

(*Speaks*)

So near and yet so far, my friends! Fog at Faversham and a fifty mile tailback. And believe me, when those tails are on the backs of horses, that's some pile-up! You can find yourself knee-deep in trouble! Personally I blame it on the medi-evil times we live in. The King's all for staying here, but I think we should find some way to move on, don't you? Well, I'm going to need your help again. Here's some new words – ready?

(*Words appear, and King Richard & Queen Berengaria enter during the singing*)

The road to London may be blocked
But hark to what we say,
A flashing light set on your roof
Will quickly clear the way,
The carts may stretch from kerb to kerb,
The outlook may be tragic,
But once you turn that blue light on
The road will clear like magic!
So we think, King Dick,
You should try this trick,
And not wait for the road building programme!

K.R. Have you seen this trick work before, minstrel?

Blondel Not personally, sire, but I am told it is most effective.

Q.B. Well you 'ave been right every time so far Blondel. I think we should give it a try Dickie cheri.

K.R. Then rig the light and let's make London by nightfall. (*Exits with the Queen*).

Blondel (*Winks at the audience*) Done it again! Let's see what's happening back in the forest. (*Exits*)

Act II Scene 1 Back in the Forest (*Full set*)

(*Chorus of Outlaws on stage as curtain opens*)

Song 14 Chorus “Happy days are here again”

(*At end, enter UR L.John, Much.B, Nun.B and Tuck*)

Tuck How did your business go today John?

L.John Like magic. We convinced the Mansfield merchant to make magnanimous movements of money to the more miserable members of the multitude. Did you get much Much?

Much B. Yes, yes! We got it all. It took six mules to carry it back to the cave.

L.John I wonder how Robin got on – we've heard nothing from him so far.

Much B. And Mother Hood and the girl have disappeared too – I hope they're alright.

L.John Well there's nothing we can do for the moment. Let's fill the time with a competition.

Nun B What sort of competition?

L.John What do you suggest?

Much B. Robin's always boasting about his ability with the bow – how about us practising while he's not here.

Chorus 1 Yes, that gives somebody else a chance to win for a change.

L.John An archery competition then.

Chorus 2 Suits me.

Chorus 3 And me.

L. John Alright, set out the targets. Much, choose your team. Tuck, you can be referee.

(Business ensues: Choosing of teams & setting up of targets. Two targets are set up on stage, with shooting coming from off-stage. Tuck is left on stage with the targets; everyone else is off-stage. Arrows fired alternately at each target. At one point Tuck turns round and bends over, and there is a target roundel fixed to his bottom; he gets hit by Robin's arrow arriving from the sky with the message. After the painful business of extracting it, Tuck reads the message).

Tuck “COME TO CASTLE WITH ALL HASTE+STOP+
MARION CAPTURED+STOP +
MEET ME AT THE SECRET ENTRANCE+STOP+
ROBIN”

L. John Marion captured! What's gone wrong? Come on men, no time to lose. Robin needs us at the castle, and here we are playing at being archers. Are you all ready?

Chorus *(General shouts of assent).*

Much B. Let's show the Sheriff a thing or two.

Tuck Let's turn the tables on him.

Nun B. Let's hit him where it hurts!

L. John Then what are we waiting for? Follow me!

Song 15 Chorus and Merry Men “Archers theme”

(They march off through auditorium to this refrain at the end)

Act II Scene 2a In the Dungeon *(Half Set)*

(Curtain opens on Marion in chains)

(Enter UL Sheriff, Oak, Beech & Shrub)

Sheriff Well now, my nice little niece. Have you thought up a better story yet?

Marion Daddy was right! He said, “Never have anything to do with your uncle – he's a bad lot!”.

Sheriff A bad lot! (*Laughs*) Well let this be a lesson to all daughters: take notice of what your father says – he’s usually right!

Marion How can you be so heartless?

Sheriff Oh, practice my dear. Practice and an insatiable desire for power! But this is getting us nowhere. What I want to know is, what have you told Hood?

Marion I’m not telling you a thing!

Sheriff Ah, a girl with spirit. Well I suppose I should expect that from my own family. It will give me even more pleasure to work hard for the information. Oak!

Oak Sir!

Sheriff What do you suggest to loosen a stubborn tongue?

(Oak, Beech & Shrub look at each other anxiously – they don’t like this)

Oak Cod liver oil?

Sheriff Cod liver oil? It’s the tongue we want to loosen, not the tummy! Have we no instruments of torture?

Beech My sister plays the violin – sir.

Sheriff What your sister does, Beech, is of no earthly interest to me at this moment. I’m looking for something to inflict pain!

Beech You haven’t heard my sister – sir.

Sheriff We may use your sister as a last resort, Beech, if all else fails. I was thinking of starting with something a bit more conventional, like the rack or the iron lady.

Oak The rack’s in ruins, sir.

Sheriff And the iron lady?

Oak Margaret Thatcher’s not due for delivery till 1979, sir, with a ‘Use By’ date of 1990.

Sheriff Then it will have to be – the saw!

Oak, Beech & Shrub No, no! Not – the saw!

Sheriff Yes, and you know what that means don’t you?

Oak It's barbaric!

Beech It's murder!

Sheriff Yes – it means I'm going to sing!

Song 16 Sheriff, Oak, Beech, Shrub & Marion “The Great Big Saw Came Nearer”

(Business of the rotating circular saw appearing slowly from SR, and getting closer and closer to Marion as the song progresses. Just as it's about to touch her, it slows down and stops rotating)

Sheriff It's stopped!

Oak It was your singing.

Beech Yes, the stagehands have gone on strike. *(At this a stagehand comes on).*

Stagehand If you think we're going to carry on here with that row going on, you can think again. We're off down the [local pub]! *(Exit with saw)*

(Enter UL Mother Hood, with food on a tray)

M.H. Hello! Did I hear the sweet sound of music just now? *(Puts finger over her lips to stop Marion speaking)* I've brought you your supper.

Sheriff Madam, this is neither the time nor the place for ...

M.H. I know you're busy with important work, but you shouldn't miss your meals you know.

Beech Ooh! That smells good! – sir.

Oak Beech! Mind you, you're right – suddenly I feel very hungry.

Sheriff Look, please can we concentrate on the job in hand and – my, but it does smell good!

M.H. I'm sure whatever you're doing can wait for a bite. Here you are, I'll put it on the table for you.

Beech Ooh yummy! I haven't eaten since breakfast.

Oak Me neither.

Shrub I didn't even have breakfast.

(They all start tucking in)

M.H. *(To the Sheriff)* You'd better eat yours Sheriff, or they'll eat it for you.

Sheriff Oh, very well! *(He sits and starts to eat).*

M.H. I've put something very special in it for you *(winks at Marion)*, very special.

Sheriff Special? What sort of special?

M.H. Something to relax you after a hard day.

Sheriff But I don't want to relax – I wan' – to ...

M.H. ... Three, out! *(At this, all three men flop out cold).* There, it works!

Marion Mother Hood! How did you get in here?

M.H. That's a long story, and we're short of time. The potion only lasts for a minute. Come on, let me get you undone. *(She unfastens Marion)*
And then let's get out of this place as fast as we can! *(They exit UL).*

(As they exit, the Sheriff stirs)

Sheriff ... don't want to relax – want to *(looks around)* – Oak! Beech!!
Shrub!!! *(They wake suddenly).*

Oak, Beech Sir?

Shrub *(a beat later)* Sir?

Sheriff She's gone!

Oak Who's gone, sir?

Sheriff The girl's gone, idiot! We've been doped, duped, done over.
That new cook was a plant!

Beech A plant, sir?

Sheriff Yes, she wheedled her way in, lettuce think she was a plum catch, boxed us, and then 'appily beet it!

Shrub That was clever!

Sheriff Clever? What's clever about it?

Shrub The way you put all names of plants in that last sentence. Weeds, lettuces, plums, ...

Oak Shrub! The Sheriff is not in the mood for mirth!

Shrub No sir, sorry sir!

Sheriff Indeed not! The Sheriff is in the mood for revenge!! After them, you dolts! – Plants! I'll plant one on you! (*They all exit UL in haste*).

Act II Scene 2b At Watford Gap (*Front of Tabs*)

(*Front of Tabs. Enter Blondel singing*)

Blondel We've made good time from London
And we're heading North apace.
We've stopped to rest at Watford Gap
And, Blimey, what a place!
They've offered us some spam and chips
Or spam with beans and toast,
The Queen is green, the King's quite white,
He looks just like a ghost!
And I think King Dick
Really feels so sick,
If he can he'll abandon his programme.

(*Speaks*)

I've never been anywhere quite like this before! It's called "The Greasy Spoon". D'you know, the King sat down at a table and they told him he had to stand in the queue like everybody else. I ask you, the King of England queuing behind a coach party from Morecambe! Is that wise? And the prices! We had to empty half the Royal Exchequer to pay for three meals here.

Now look, we're almost there. There's a big blue sign outside that's got "Nottingham 60" written on it. And I've found a very kind man who says he can get us all there in an hour in his waggon. So help me out one last time, will you? Oh look, it's the Queen this time.

(*Words appear, and Queen B. enters SR during the singing. He sings*)

Bonjour to you, your Majesty,
I hope you're feeling mieux,

We've just had news from Nottingham
And it's not good, Mon Dieu!
They say that Robin and his men
Are set to storm the chateau,
And if they do, I'm telling you,
It's not a piece of gâteau!
So I think King Dick
Better get there quick
Or we'll say "Au Revoir" to our programme.

Q.B. Oh Blondel, this 'as been such an 'orrible journey. My Dickie is quite put out.

Blondel Only a short time now, your Majesty, and we'll be there.

Q.B. Oh I do 'ope so. It 'as been long and 'ard. A girl can only take so much!

Blondel Quite so, your Majesty.

Q.B. Personally, I blame it on the Medi-evil times we live in.

Blondel Indeed, your majesty.

Q.B. You are sure we 'ave nearly come to the end?

Blondel Absolutely, your Majesty.

Q.B. 'ow can you know this?

Blondel Because I've seen the script, your Majesty, and there's only a few more pages to go!

Q.B. Well, in that case I'm sure I can encourage my Dickie to make one more effort.

Blondel You ask your Dickie to come here quickie, and we'll get to Nottingham in a jiffy.

Q.B. A jeefy? What is this jeefy that we shall be in?

Blondel The man called it an "Artic". Ah, here he is now.

(Enter SL the Driver)

Driver Your party ready Guv? Time I was rolling.

Q.B. I will go to get my Dickie. *(Exits SR)*

Blondel *(To the Driver)* Just waiting for the King to arrive.

Driver The King! Pop group are you?

Blondel Pop group?

Driver You sing?

Blondel Indeed I do sir. I sing for the King.

Driver Well I hope you're better than *(current rave)* then.

Blondel Ah, here he comes now.

(Enter K.R. with Q.B.)

K.R. The Queen tells me we are to ride to Nottingham from here, Blondel, in an Artic. What is an Artic?

Blondel A large waggon, sire, with eight wheels I am told.

K.R. Eight wheels! I have never seen such a contraption. *(To the Driver)*
Are you the driver?

Driver That's right, Guv. You ready for off?

K.R. For off? Are we ready for that, Blondel?

Blondel We are, your majesty.

K.R. Then let us mount this strange waggon and head for Nottingham.

(The King and Queen exit SL with the Driver. There is the sound and smoke of a Diesel lorry starting up and driving off)

Blondel *(To audience)* Thanks again! – see you in Nottingham! *(Exits, chasing lorry)*

Act II Scene 3 Outside Nottingham Castle *(Full Set)*

(Chorus of Townspeople on stage as curtain opens)

Song 17 Chorus “I’ve got rhythm”

(Chorus exits at end of song)

(Enter UR L.John, Much B, Tuck and Nun B).

Tuck Have I got time to pop into the pastry shop before we meet Robin?

Nun B. Pop into the pastry shop? You're about ready to pop without going into the pastry shop!

Much B. We haven't rushed all this way from the forest just to give you the chance to fill your face Friar!

Nun B. If Robin's in trouble, he'll want us to find him as soon as possible.

Much B. So tighten your belt up and follow us.

Tuck Tighten my belt up?

Nun B. Yes, belt up!!

L.John Brothers and sisters – we are wasting time. The message said meet Robin outside the secret entrance.

Much B. So let's go!

Nun B. Right with you!

Tuck Oh, all right.

Much B. Where is it then?

L.John The secret entrance?

Much B. Yes, which way is it?

L.John It's this way – I think!

Nun B. You think?

Much B. You mean you don't know?

L.John I think I know.

Nun B. But you don't know you know.

L.John No, I don't know I know.

Much B. Oh no!

Nun B. But you don't know you don't know either.

L.John No, I don't know I don't know. All I know is that ...

Tuck This is a no-no, and no mistake! I think I'll just pop round to the patisserie while you're sorting yourselves out!

All No!!

Tuck Oh!

L. John We'll go this way, and if we get lost ...

Much B. ... we'll find a friendly face and ask the way.

Song 18 Merry Men “Ask a policeman”

(Enter SL Oak, Beech and Shrub)

Oak Halt! Who goes there?

Much B. Ah! Not the sort of friendly face I had in mind!

Tuck *(Going towards Oak)* We are a deputation, your militancy, from a far flung friary in the forest.

Oak From a friary in the forest? What kind of deputation is this? You don't all look like friars to me. I think you're fakes!! Beech, summon the Sheriff!

Beech Sir! Shrub, summon the Sheriff!

Shrub Why, what's he done?

Beech I'll do you! Off you go, at the double *(Shrub exits SL)*

Nun B. Fakes? We're far from fakes!

Much B. We're four fugitives fleeing from fearful adversary.

L. John Fickle fate has found us bereft of fortune.

Tuck We are forced to find favour from Sheriff Cluff.

Oak *(To Tuck)* And what is your name, fatty?

Tuck Tuck, your constabulary!

Oak *(Reacts)* I see. Well Tuck, you seem to be the only one that looks like a friar. Perhaps you can explain your friends' dress?

Much B. Ah well, you see we've lived for so long in the woods that ...

L. John ... we've just got out of the habit ...

Much B. ... so to speak ...

L. John ... if you know what we mean.

Oak No, I don't know what you mean. But I know a man who does.
Here's the Sheriff now.

(Enter SL the Sheriff with Shrub)

Sheriff Ah Oak, I hear we have some interesting visitors.

Oak Four friars from the forest, sir.

(The Sheriff inspects them)

Sheriff Very interesting. From the forest you say? Fascinating things
come out of the forest!

Tuck Oh, we're not fascinating in the least!

Much B. Not one bit.

L.John I'd say we were the most uninteresting people you ever saw.

Nun B. No conversation worth talking of!

Tuck Really boring ...

Much B. ... uninteresting ...

L.John ... common or garden ...

Nun B. ... people you wouldn't even cross the street to meet.

Tuck So, we'll just be on our way – and, er, get out of your way – and ...

Sheriff I'm not satisfied!

Nun B. *(With feeling)* Oh, I am sorry!

Sheriff You soon will be! I'm running you in.

L.John On what grounds?

Sheriff Deviation, Hesitation, Repetition – and for looking altogether too
pleased with yourselves!

Much B. You can't charge us with that!

Sheriff I can charge you with whatever I like, because I'm in charge here.
Oak!

Oak Sir!

Sheriff Clap this lot in the stocks!

L. John (*Threatening*) You and who else?

Sheriff Me and my militia! (*At this, a number of soldiers appear from both sides of the stage, bringing the stocks*). You're surrounded!

(*At this moment, Robin enters DR*)

Robin Your soldiers are no match for my men Cluff! Call them off before they get hurt.

Sheriff Robin Hood – we meet at last.

Robin Yes, and not a moment too soon. Have you Maid Marion?

Sheriff I have – er – recently had the pleasure of my niece's company, yes.

Robin And what have you done with her?

Sheriff Incarcerated her!

Nun B. You what?

Sheriff Locked her up.

Robin The Sheriff likes using big words. It inflates his ego. Personally I blame it on the medi-evil times we live in. Where is Marion now?

Sheriff Why should I tell you?

Robin Because if you don't, I'll drag it out of you!

Sheriff Drag? You're a fine one, talking about drag. I'm more of a man than you'll ever be!

Robin Then I challenge you, here before all your men, to a personal duel. Winner takes all.

Sheriff Done! Choose your weapon. But I warn you, I am well trained in all the martial arts.

Robin Who said anything about martial arts? I challenge you to – a skipping contest!

Sheriff A what!??

Robin You heard! Bring on the ropes! (*The chorus enters. Two townschildren bring on a rope each*).

(Business of the skipping competition with townschildren involved. Sheriff cheats – of course – with the help of Oak and Beech. Robin loses and is dragged towards the stocks)

(Suddenly there is the sound of a large Diesel lorry approaching and stopping – possibly another cloud of smoke. All on stage stop petrified – as K.Richard enters DR with Q.Berengaria and entourage in the nick of time. However, Blondel is not with them).

K.R. Stop, in the name of the King! *(He goes up to the Sheriff)* So, Sheriff – you thought you'd become a ruler while I was away Crusading, eh?

Sheriff Oh no sire! I couldn't measure up to you!

K.R. And you, Sir Robin. I hear you've taken to banditry!

All SIR Robin??

(At this, Oak, Beech & Shrub diplomatically change sides)

K.R. Sir Robin of Loxley. We know each other well, do we not?

Robin Indeed we do, sire! I did what I could to uphold your name while you were away. Unfortunately I had to take to the forests to do it.

K.R. And take much else besides, it seems.

Robin We have caves full of treasure snatched from Prince John's plundering agents. But now you have returned, bringing law and order again, all we have collected is yours!

Q.B. Who is he, this friend of yours Dickie?

K.R. He is a rogue, my Queen – but a kind hearted one. *(To the Sheriff)*
As for you, Sheriff Cluff ...

Sheriff Wh – where am I going, sire? To the Tower?

K.R. The Tower? No, there's enough warped rulers there already. I have a better idea.

L.John Boil him in oil!

Much B. Fry him in Spry!

K.R. No, we'll give him a dose of his own medicine. Put him in the stocks!

(Business of Oak and Beech putting the Sheriff in the stocks)

Sheriff Here! Who's side are you on?

Oak Sorry, Sheriff!

Beech We're on the side of law and order.

Sheriff Since when?

Robin Since about two minutes ago! We're all King Richard's men now.
(*To the audience*) Who wants first shot at the villain?

(*Business with the audience invited to throw damp sponges(?) at the Sheriff. After a while –*)

K.R. Enough, release him! That should have dampened his ardour. Now I have work for him to do.

Sheriff Work?

K.R. Yes, work. I have heard that they need a new administrator in one of our French possessions.

Sheriff A French possession? ... Not ...

Much B. You don't mean ...

Tuck You can't mean ...

Nun B. He does! It's ...

All Vaudeville!?! (*Everybody on stage slaps their thigh*)

K.R. Yes indeed. It should keep him safely amused for a few years and out of harm's way.

Sheriff But sire ...

K.R. Enough Cluff, get your stuff!

L. John Hit the road, or we'll get rough!

Sheriff ... I can't walk all that way.

Much B. (*Mimicking*) Well walk a different way then!

K.R. I'm not a mean monarch. (*Looking around*) Who will lend the Sheriff transport for his journey?

(*Members of the chorus come in to offer various means of transport, for example: a scooter, a skateboard, a pogo-stick – none of them will do*)

K.R. Oh come on – somebody must have something better he can use.

(Enter DR Blondel, leading a Pantomime horse)

Blondel Here you are, sire!

Q.B. Blondel! I thought we 'ad lost you back at that 'orrible restaurant.

Blondel You can't keep a good minstrel down, your majesty. After I missed getting on the waggon, I found a four-legged friend to bring me here. And now we've arrived, I'm sure he'd suit the Sheriff down to the ground.

(Horse reacts at this and through the following dialogue)

Tuck What that old nag?

Nun B. He won't get you further than the market square.

Q.B. Don't be so unkind. I think he is a lovely 'orse! *(Pats him on his rump)*

Song 19 and Dance – All with Panto horse “Giddy up a ding-dong”

K.R. It's that or nothing – which do you prefer?

Sheriff *(Reluctantly)* Oh all right – I'll take the horse.

(Business of the Sheriff trying to get on the horse. The horse is obviously not keen on the idea either. Eventually he gets up, his bags are brought in by Oak and Beech and loaded on, and with much ado, he rides off through auditorium)

Robin Just a minute – he didn't tell us where Marion is.

(Enter DR Mother Hood and Marion)

M.H. Oh, that's all right. She's with me!

Robin Mother! How did you do it?

M.H. Oh, let's say I used a little pot luck.

Robin Marion, are you all right?

Marion *(Goes to Robin)* Yes, I'm fine. I was worried they'd catch you too, and it would be my fault.

Robin No more worries like that now. King Richard is back *(points to him)*, the Sheriff is off to foreign parts, and we ...

Marion Yes Robin?

Robin Well frankly, I didn't think I was the Marion kind, but -

Song 20 Robin and Marion “Till there was you”

Robin Now the King has come back to restore peace and order, I shall leave the forest to the fairies, and start to lead a normal life, in a normal house with a normal wife.

Marion You may not find that easy to do.

Robin I may not. But if I have you by my side Marion, it will be easier. Will you marry me?

Marion Oh Robin – yes!!

(Mother Hood sobs loudly)

Robin Mother, aren't you glad?

M.H. *(Still sobbing)* Oh yes – ecstatically!

Marion Don't cry Mother. You'll come and live with us, won't you?

M.H. But what about the rest of my family? *(indicates the others)*.

K.R. I shall need trusty retainers to look after my affairs here in Nottingham after I return to London. I'm sure the Hood gang can turn their hands to legitimate ends for a change.

(All agree enthusiastically)

Then Robin, I give you possession of the Castle in my name. There's plenty of room for you and all your extended family to live there!

Robin Thank you sire. We will respect that trust.

K.R. And now, let's prepare for your wedding.

Robin You will come to that, my lord?

K.R. I wouldn't miss it for all the Crusades in the Med!

Song 21 All “Get me to the church on time”

(Curtain closes at end)

Act II Scene 4 Back in the Fairy Glen (Front of Tabs)

(Enter SR Queen Fay with excited Fairies)

Fairy 1 Have you heard the news my lady?

Fairy 2 Robin Hood's to leave the shady
Forest for a life more formal.

Fairy 3 Mortals seem to think that's normal!

Q. Fay Yes my elves, the news is good,
And not the least for Robin Hood;
Now Nottingham's restored to peace
He's marrying the Sheriff's niece.

Fairy 4 Marrying?

Q. Fay A mortal custom.

Fairy 5 What's it mean?

Fairy 6 I wouldn't trust 'em!

Q. Fay Marrying is when they see
That sometimes one and one make three!

Fairy 7 One and one make three? How so?

Q. Fay I'll tell you later Moth. Now go
And let the other fairies hear
The news you have. It's sure to cheer
Them up a bit – oh dearie me!
It must be time for fairy tea!

Fairy 5 But, just a minute, who comes near? *(fairies exit SR)*

Q. Fay What hempen homespuns have we here?

(L. John and Much B. enter SL with bows and arrows)

It's Little John and that Much Binding!
(To them) Now then you two – you be minding
What you do in this here wood,
I'd say you mean to do no good!

L. John Who's that?

Much B. A fairy!

Robin Hood

L.John I'll be jiggered!

Much B. (*To L.John*) Don't say why we've come!

Q. Fay I've figured!
 Could it be to hunt for deer?
 They say that there's a few round here.
 (*They try to hide their bows*)

L.John Us hunt for deer?

Much B. Say that again?

Q. Fay Why hide the bows? It's very plain
 You've come to catch a hind or two
 To serve at Robin's banquet – true?

L.John Well, put like that ...

Much B. ... What can we say?

Q. Fay Not much, Much. Now, hear what I say,
 You'll leave the rabbits, deer and birds
 To live in peace here. Violent words
 And violent deeds are not much cared for
 In my forest. We're prepared for
 Folk like you to come along,
 That's why we're going to sing this song!

L.John A song?

Much B. What, us?

Q. Fay A little ditty
 Which we think is rather pretty.
 (*To audience*) Would you all please help us sing?

L.John How does it go?

Much B. "God save the King"?

Q.Fay It's nothing that you'll need to dread ...

Man (*Entering SR*) I've got an arrow in my head!

L.John I don't know that one.

Much B. How's it go?

Q.Fay It doesn't – he does – (*to man*) off you go!
You'll not come here and spoil our song.

L.John No, he can help us ...

Much B. ... sing along.

Q.Fay We need that like a hole in the head.

(The man pulls his arrow out)

L.John He's got one!

(Business as John and Much peer through the hole in his head and wave at each other)

Q.Fay (*heavy irony*) Wonderful! I dread
to think what noise it makes.

(More business as Much and John make Swanee Whistle noises by pretending to blow through the hole)

Much B. Let's have a go!

L.John Is that the tune?

Q. Fay The answer's 'No'!
The tune we want is much more fun,
(To pianist) Play Maestro please, "Run Rabbit Run".

Song 22 Q. Fay, L.John, Much B. "Run Rabbit Run"

(The Community Song ensues. At the end:-)

Q. Fay Now on your way, and tell your master
Deer are quick, but Fay is faster!
(To audience) So let's go now and see them make
A wedding feast of soya steak!

(All exit, to relief of the audience)

Act II Scene 5 Inside the Castle (Full Set)

(Chorus of Townspeople & Castle Attendants on stage as curtain opens)

Song 23 Chorus “The night they invented champagne”

(Enter Blondel from upstage).

Blondel My liege, King Richard, commands you all to enjoy yourself and make merry on this special day. Sir Robin and Lady Marion welcome you to their wedding feast, and ... *(Mother Hood brings in something which looks fairly large and inedible on a platter)* ... what's that?!

M.H. Well, it's not deer!

Blondel I can see that – I should think it cost next to nothing!

M.H. Oh, ha jolly ha! Here's my only son getting married, with the King of England in attendance, and this is all we have to offer him! Personally I blame it on the medi-evil times we live in.

Blondel Was the hunt unsuccessful?

M.H. That depends on how you rate success. They came back with a sack full of beans and a promise from a fairy! *(Ting!)*

Blondel What promise?

M.H. Plant the beans, and they'll grow into next year's pantomime!

Blondel Sounds like a tall story to me!

M.H. Anyway, what am I going to do with this enormous beanburger? I can't give it to the King.

Blondel Much Binding?

M.H. Not since I took the herbal remedy and ... oh, I see what you mean! No, I don't think he'd like it, Much. But the Friar will eat anything! That only leaves one problem.

Blondel Er – Little John?

M.H. No, the Friar manages quite well on the convenience we've got.

Blondel Ah! So what's the problem?

M.H. What to feed everybody else on. They'll be fed up if I don't feed them.

Blondel Well I have a little secret.

M.H. What's that?

Blondel It's a secret! But I could be tempted to tell it – to a nice girl like you!

M.H. (*Preens herself*) You must be going blind!

Blondel (*Takes a closer look*) Perhaps you're right! (*M.H. unpreens herself*). Anyway, look I've brought some duty-frees with me – wines, perfumes, a quantity of strange brown weed, and – food!

M.H. Food! Why didn't you say? Where is it?

Blondel Up in my room!

M.H. Oh, you magnificent little minstrel you! Show me the way!

Blondel (*As they start to exit DL*) I'd rather show you the food!

M.H. Quick! The procession's about to start! (*They exit*).

Song 24 Chorus “The night they invented champagne” (reprise)

(Walkdown of principals. At the end of all the bows and curtsies ...)

Beech (*Looking around*) Just a minute – there's someone missing!

Robin Who's missing, Beech?

Oak (*Threatening*) Beech!!

Robin Why I know who! It's – General Thigh-Slapping!!

(At this, the entire company, chorus, backstage, lighting crew, and probably the audience too, all slap their thighs!)

L.John Personally I blame it on the medi-evil times we live in!

*** END OF ROBIN HOOD ***

Producer's Notes

This pantomime uses three different full set scenes, separated by half set or front of curtain scenes to allow for backstage activity.

Directions given are those used in the original production, but use your imagination according to the facilities available to you. We used the central aisle of the auditorium for the 'cricket match' with fielders spread round the audience; and for the archery competition we had two targets on stage with strings attached to the bulls so that arrows could slide down from above.

A list of songs used in the original production is included for your guidance, and where special words were written these are also included, but feel free to adapt or adopt your own as required.

The concept of the Community Song is where the audience is invited to come up on the stage to help out, and some sort of raucous competition ensues between those brave enough to come up and those left sitting in the auditorium. ("Invited" is perhaps a little inaccurate on occasions, when members of the cast go down in search of friends and other victims!). The positioning of this event just before the final scene also gives people not involved plenty of time to change into their finery for the Walkdown.

I used the general convention that immortals, in this case Queen Fay and the fairies, speak in rhyme and mortals in prose, and I have introduced the concept of a Prologue and an Interlogue (no, the latter is not in the dictionary) as much as anything to give time for the chorus to react to the fact that the show has started, and actually get on stage! This is known as pragmatism.

So good luck with your show. Put in local variations as you wish, and if you think you can improve on the verse then do that too! Have fun – otherwise, why do it?

PS I'm very happy for you to video your production – in fact I would recommend it. We have found that to show an early dress rehearsal to cast and crew in place of a straight rehearsal can be time well spent.

Pantomimes & Plays by John Owen Smith

Full length pantomimes (2 acts) with one interval:

- **Aladdin** The pantomime with the flying palace – 15 speaking parts + chorus
- **Ali Baba** Scheherazade introduces her very last Arabian Night's tale – 18 speaking parts + chorus
- **Cinderella** Baron Hardup's household as tradition tells it – with immortal lines – 14 speaking parts + chorus
- **Dick Whittington** and his cat – the tale as recorded by Fred Chaucer – 16 speaking parts + chorus
- **Humpty Dumpty** The Muffet Mob's on the loose – can old egghead save the day? – 16 speaking parts + 7 children speaking + chorus
- **Jack and the Beanstalk** Witch Whey's wicked wheeze won't work – will it? – 17 speaking parts + chorus
- **Nutcracker** The script Tchaikovsky might have set to music, if he'd known – 15 speaking parts + chorus
- **Puss in Boots** That talking cat gets everywhere – and gets his just desserts! – 15 speaking parts + chorus
- **Little Red Riding Hood** There could be a fete worse than death – ask the Wolf! – 16 speaking parts + chorus
- **Robin Hood** A cricket match in Sherwood Forest? There's Nun Better to play – 15 speaking parts + chorus
- **Sleeping Beauty** The show with an interval of a hundred years! – 11 speaking parts + chorus
- **Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs** The mirror's off the wall in more ways than one! – 18 speaking parts + chorus

Mini Pantomimes (in verse): approx 15-20 mins run time

- **Cinderelder** Prince Charming gets a bit fed up with Cinderella after 20 years! – 9 speaking parts
- **Bleeding Moody** Can you imagine the Sleeping Beauty as a teenager of today? – 6 speaking parts

Full length plays (2 acts) with one interval:

- **Flora's Heatherley** An historical play based on Flora Thompson's time in Grayshott 1898–1901 – 20 speaking parts
- **Flora's Peverel** An historical play based on Flora Thompson's time in Liphook 1916–1928 – 25 speaking parts
- **The Broomsquire** Adapted from the novel by Sabine Baring-Gould – 20 speaking parts (can be performed by 10 people)
- **MacHamlet** A Shakespearean comedy – 21 speaking parts
- **Bard Again!** MacHamlet takes to foreign parts – 21 speaking parts
- **MacHamlet Goes West!** and meets a Tempest – 23 speaking parts