

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD

Written by Michele L. Vacca

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ROBIN HOOD PRODUCTION NOTES:

CHARACTERS:

Robin Hood
Little John
Will Scarlett
Friar Tuck
Sir Guy of Gisborne, the Sheriff of Nottingham
Oswald, the Unready, the Sheriff's deputy
Lady Marian Fitzwalter, daughter of Sir Richard of The Lea
Midge the Miller
Nell Stutely, Innkeeper at the Sign of The Blue Bell
Alfred, the Saxon

The script is designed so that a total of nine actors (three women and six men) can play all the roles. Alfred the Saxon, a one-scene role, can be played by the same actor who plays Oswald. For those who do not need to work within a cast size limitation, a number of extra "merry men and women," as well as sheriff guards and townspeople could be added to increase the number of roles.

TIME AND LOCATIONS:

Act I Nottinghamshire, England in the month of April in the year 1194 AD.

Scene 1 – A meadow in Sherwood Forest by the Great North Road.

Scene 2 – The nearby village of Edwinstowe.

Scene 3 – The following day, in the heart of Sherwood Forest.

Act II The town of Nottingham, the following day, a fairground in front of the Castle.

SETTINGS: can be elaborate or simple, depending upon budget and physical capabilities of a particular performing space. All the locations in the script are exteriors. Suggested, moveable scenery can work just as well as large drops and platforms.

COSTUMES: also can be of any general medieval style, with color and texture being more "super playable" than literal realism. Marian, as a lady of the aristocracy, and the heroine, should have some attractive ensembles. According to legend, fun-loving Robin and his band were very fond of

disguises: hence the frequent use of disguise as a ploy in the script.

THE ARCHERY TOURNAMENT AND THE SWORD FIGHT

IN ACT II: Like the famous Ascot race scene in MY FAIR LADY the entire archery contest action is designed so that it can happen off stage. In a proscenium style production the final round of the contest can be brought on stage, if desired, and staged safely with the use of a “false” target. This is a device, which creates the illusion of accurate arrow shots, even if the actors have no real archery ability at all. This device can be built by a professional magic shop or by a special effects company. We can offer suggestions as to how this may be accomplished. It works quite well, but may be too expensive for some budgets. How simple or elaborate the swordplay between Robin and the Sheriff may be depends upon the skills of the actors, and of course, the amount of stage space available. Much of this sequence, too, could happen off stage. Obviously, the duration of the sequence is totally a matter of the director’s choice.

GENERAL:

The use of music and sound effects, live or taped, greatly enhances the production of this play.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Research for this script was done in England in 1987, primarily in the Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Sherwood, and Barnsdale areas. All of the place names referenced are traditional or appear in legend. Beneath the city of Nottingham there are indeed underground passageways; which are in the process of excavation. The Bluebell Inn still exists, and there really is a little pub adjoining the outer walls of Nottingham Castle.

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THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD

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ACT I

(A HORN SOUNDS, AND MUSIC PLAYS. THE CURTAIN RISES ON A SPRING DAY IN SHERWOOD FOREST IN THE YEAR 1194. A MAN ENTERS, WHISTLING CHEERFULLY. HE STOPS, BREATHEES DEEPLY, AND SPEAKS, APPARENTLY TO HIMSELF.)

ROBIN: (FOR HE IS THE MAN.) Ah, to be in England, now that April is here! Right, my friends?

ALL: (HIS COMPANIONS POP OUT FROM BEHIND THE TREES TO AGREE.) Aye, Aye!

ROBIN: By the mighty oaks of Sherwood, I would rather roam free in the boundless forest, than be King of all England!

ALL: Aye, Aye! This is the life for us!

ROBIN: Besides, we HAVE a fine King, our noble Richard the Lionheart!

ALL: Hear, hear! King Richard the Lionheart!

ROBIN: May he return safe from the Crusade!

ALL: Aye, Aye!

ROBIN: And may he return SOON!

ALL: Aye, Aye! Soon!

ROBIN: Before his evil brother, Prince John, steals his kingdom!

ALL: Aye!

ROBIN: And before the greedy Sheriff of Nottingham ruins us all!

ALL: Aye!

ROBIN: King Richard the Lionheart!

ALL: King Richard the Lionheart!

ROBIN: Come, my friends, 'tis too fine a day to idle about. Let us seek an adventure or two or three.

ALL: Aye, aye. Adventure!

ROBIN: We'll seek out some wrongs to right, and a good deed to do.

ALL: Aye, Aye!

JOHN: What have ye in mind, Rob?

ROBIN: Nothing particular, Little John. But I suspect that one thing or another will chance our way.
WILL: It always does.
ROBIN: Right you are, Will Scarlett.
ALL: Aye, aye!
ROBIN: We'll just follow this Great North Road, until we see –
TUCK: Hark! Robin!
ROBIN: Aye, Friar Tuck?
TUCK: Someone on the path!
ROBIN: The adventure begins!
ALL: Aye, aye!
ROBIN: Hide ye, my friends. I'll scope the wind to see which way it blow; what have we here? A friend or foe . . . ?

(THEY HIDE BEHIND THE TREES AGAIN. ALFRED THE SAXON, A POOR YEOMAN ENTERS, MOANING TO HIMSELF AS HE WALKS.)

ALFRED: Woe is me. Oh, woe is me!
ROBIN: Not a very happy fellow.
ALFRED: Woe is me!! Ohhh, woe is me!!!!
ROBIN: A MOST unhappy fellow.
ALL: (SYMPATHETICALLY.) Aye, aye!
ROBIN: (TO ALFRED.) What ho, good sir!
ALFRED: What ho, yourself, sirrah.
ROBIN: A fine day to be in England, sir!
ALFRED: Well, not such a fine day to be in NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.
ROBIN: Say you so?
ALFRED: Are you going to rob me?
ROBIN: Why – no.
ALFRED: Go ahead. Rob me. I don't care. I have nothing. The greedy Sheriff of Nottingham has already taken all I had.
ROBIN: Has he, indeed?
ALL: (SOUNDS OF SYMPATHY.) Awwwwww!
ALFRED: What was that?
ROBIN: 'Tis naught.
ALFRED: (SEES ROBIN'S COMPANIONS.) Who are THESE?
ROBIN: No need to fear. They are with me.
ALFRED: I should guard my tongue. Are you Sheriff's men?
ROBIN: Nay, nay. Not likely.
ALL: Nay, nay.
ROBIN: The Sheriff is not welcome in this part of Sherwood.
ALFRED: The Sheriff is not welcome anywhere. Yet he comes

anyway.
 ROBIN: Not HERE.
 ALL: Nay, nay!
 ALFRED: Yesterday he came to our village of Thoresby to collect the taxes.
 ROBIN: Aye, aye. April IS the usual time.
 ALL: (EXPRESS THEIR OPINION OF TAXES AND TAX TIME.)
 ALFRED: Aye, April is the USUAL time, but in OUR village, it's not the ONLY time!
 ROBIN: By the Greenwood, sir, what mean you?
 ALFRED: The Sheriff visits Thoresby EVERY month.
 ROBIN: To collect taxes?!
 ALFRED: To collect anything he can. In October he took our early harvest. In November he took the late harvest. In December he took our front door. In January he took the firewood. In February he took our favorite soup pot – with the soup still in it. In March he took the roof from our cottage, and yesterday he took my children's only two toys!
 ROBIN & ALL: (SOUNDS OF INDIGNATION AND OUTRAGE.)
 ALFRED: All this in good King Richard's name.
 ROBIN: It's an outrage!
 ALL: Aye, aye!!
 ALFRED: We survived the winter only by means of mysterious gifts that appeared on our doorstep over the night.
 ROBIN: Gifts?
 ALFRED: Aye, sometimes food, or firewood or warm clothes.
 ROBIN: I see.
 ALFRED: And once a pair of boots!
 ALL: Ahhh!
 ROBIN: And your neighbors?
 ALFRED: They, too, found gifts.
 ALL: Ahhhh!
 ALFRED: (AS THO CONFIDING A SECRET.) I believe these gifts all came from Robin Hood!
 ROBIN: (PRETENDING GREAT SHOCK.) Robin Hood!! The notorious robber and outlaw!?
 ALFRED: Outlaw, forsooth! Only because the Sheriff says so, and if you ask me, it's the Sheriff who's the robber! Robin Hood is a loyal friend of the poor! He's our ONLY friend while good King Richard is away on Crusade – !
 ROBIN: (LAUGHING.) Enough, fellow, enough, I say!

ALFRED: I praise Robin Hood, sir! I won't listen to anything against him – not from you, nor from these shifty rogues!

ROBIN: I see.

ALFRED: WHAT do you see?

ROBIN: You are indeed a true friend to Robin Hood.

ALL: Aye, aye!

ALFRED: And I'll bludgeon any one of you who is not also his friend.

ROBIN: Peace, I beg you. We are ALL good friends of Robin Hood.

ALL: Aye, aye!

ROBIN: I am probably Robin Hood's BEST friend.

ALFRED: Truly? Can ye take me to him? Or point the way?

ALL: Aye, aye!

ALFRED: Oh, this is wonderful! I want to beg Robin to help us.

ROBIN: What is your name?

ALFRED: Alfred the Saxon.

ALL: (THEY RECOGNIZE THE NAME.) Ahhh!

ALFRED: You know me?

ROBIN: Aye, sir, we do. And so does Robin Hood.

ALFRED: Where IS Robin Hood?

ROBIN: Here before you.

ALFRED: What?

ROBIN: I am Robin Hood!

ALFRED: Robin Hood? The champion of the poor?

ROBIN: Nay, sir, the champion of ALL who are treated unfairly!

ALL: Aye, aye!

ROBIN: And these "shifty rogues" are my loyal companions.

ALFRED: (GRABS ROBIN'S HAND AND SHAKES IT ENTHUSIASTICALLY.) ROBIN HOOD! It's an honor, sir!

ROBIN: I thank you.

ALFRED: (TO THE OTHERS.) How do ye do! It's an honor! (ETC.)

ROBIN: Now Alfred, if you follow this path into the vale, you enter a wooded glen, where you will find a mighty oak big enough to hide ten tall men. Await us there, and we'll dine together when the sun goes down. Then we'll decide how to help you.

ALFRED: Oh, Robin, how can I repay you?

ROBIN: No need for payment, Alfred.

ALL: Nay, nay.

ROBIN: Hold, Alfred. Might ye know where the Sheriff plans to

rob and pillage TODAY?
ALFRED: Today he robs Edwinstowe.
ROBIN: Aha! Edwinstowe!
ALL: Ahhh!
WILL: That's not far from here, Rob.
ROBIN: Right you are, Will. Excuse us, Alfred the Saxon, but urgent business calls us away.
ALL: To Edwinstowe!
ALFRED: Take care, Robin.
ROBIN: Oh, we always take care. We may not always be WISE, but we are careful. Farewell, we'll meet anon!
ALL: Aye, aye!
TUCK: Well, well. Adventure beckons.
WILL: It waves a flag!
JOHN: Two flags and a banner!
ROBIN: Well said, Little John. By the holly and the ivy, we have some wrongs to make right.
WILL: And some collecting of our OWN to do.
TUCK: It's been so long since we've seen our beloved friend, the Sheriff of Nottingham.
ROBIN: Most unmannerly of us.
JOHN: I, for one, have missed his company.
WILL: Oh, I, too, Little John.
TUCK: (PIOUSLY.) We must make amends.
ALL: Aye, aye!
ROBIN: You three come with me. The rest of you surround the village, but stay hidden. Be ready to answer, should I sound the horn!
ALL: Aye, aye!
ROBIN: Put on your disguises! To Edwinstowe, my friends!
ALL: Aye, aye! To Edwinstowe!

(THEY GO OFF. MUSIC PLAYS, AND THE SCENE SHIFTS TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF EDWINSTOWE, A SMALL VILLAGE IN THE VERY HEART OF SHERWOOD FOREST. AS THE LIGHTS COME UP, MISTRESS NELL ENTERS FROM HER INN, THE SIGN OF THE BLUE BELL. SHE WAVES TO A NEIGHBOR OR TWO AS THEY PASS BY.)

NELL: Greetings, Rowena! Good day, Edward!

(NOW ROBIN, WILL, TUCK, AND JOHN DRIFT INTO

TOWN . . . ONE BY ONE. THEY HAVE ALL ASSUMED SOME SORT OF DISGUISE. TUCK IS STILL A FRIAR, BUT HE HAS CHANGED HATS. AS THEY ENTER THEY GLANCE FURTIVELY ABOUT, GATHER TOGETHER, AND THEN SPREAD APART AGAIN. THEY PRETEND TO BE STRANGERS, SO THAT THEY CAN SCOPE OUT THE TOWN.)

ROBIN: (TO TUCK.) Greetings, Father.
TUCK: Greetings, my son.
WILL: (TO JOHN.) Oh, pardon me, sir.
JOHN: Oh, do pardon me, sir.
ROBIN: (TO WILL.) Nice day.
WILL: Very nice day.
JOHN: Some pennies for the poor, Father.
TUCK: Bless you, my son.

(WHILE THIS IS GOING ON MIDGE ENTERS DRESSED AS A WOMAN OF THE TOWN. SHE CROSSES TO THE FOUR MAN CROWD SCENE, LOOKS AROUND AND SPEAKS.)

MIDGE: Psssst!

(THE FOUR GATHER NEAR HER, PRETENDING TO LOOK ELSEWHERE.)

ROBIN: What is it?
MIDGE: All is well. We are ready.
ROBIN: Good work. Wait for the outcry.
MIDGE: We will. (SHE GOES OFF.)

(NELLS NOW SUDDENLY GETS THE DRIFT OF WHAT IS GOING ON.)

NELL: ROBIN!
ALL: SHHHHH!
ROBIN: Hark! Can this be the famous Blue Bell Inn?
NELL: You know it is.
ROBIN: What ho! 'Tis Mistress Nell!
ALL: What ho, Nell!
NELL: (HIGHLY AMUSED.) What ho, yourselves! What brings you to Edwinstowe, Robin?

ROBIN: Shhh! Call us not by name!
NELL: Nay, I won't. Why these disguises?
ALL: Shhh!
ROBIN: Well, good Nell, have ye a jug of good spring cider?
NELL: (PLAYING ALONG.) I do, IF ye have means to PAY for it.
ROBIN: Here is a coin. And its brothers. That should do.
NELL: Ah! Sit ye down, good sirs. Or stand on your heads, or do whatever ye like. Save knock down the building. I have use for it.
WILL: We'll care for the place as though it were our very own.
NELL: Aye, I know. But you're welcome all the same.
JOHN: We thank ye, Nell.
TUCK: Bless you, Nell.
NELL: What's going on?
ROBIN: The Sheriff comes here today.
NELL: The Sheriff!!!
ALL: Shhh!
JOHN: To collect taxes.
NELL: AGAIN!
ALL: Shhh!
ROBIN: But we have a plan.
NELL: Somehow I thought you did.
ROBIN: As you see, we're disguised. I am a peddler.
WILL: I'm a beggar.
JOHN: I'm a farmer.
TUCK: And I am a poor travelling friar.
NELL: (TO FRIAR.) Very clever.
ROBIN: All the others are disguised, too. Nell, you must help us.
NELL: What's the plan?
ROBIN: Simply this: we must warn the people that the Sheriff is coming. When he arrives, they hide, and we take their places.
NELL: And then?
WILL: The people are safe.
NELL: And their property?
ROBIN: As fast as the Sheriff takes, we shall take BACK again.
NELL: Ah!
WILL: You'll see, Nell.
JOHN: It always works.
TUCK: WE have justice on our side.
ROBIN: Well said, Friar Tuck.
JOHN: Hark!

WILL: A cloud of dust!
TUCK: Upon the horizon!
ROBIN: Aha!
WILL: Uh-oh!
JOHN: Is it – ?
ROBIN: Who else?
TUCK: The Sheriff!
NELL: Alas, we must warn the people!
ROBIN: (TO THEM ALL.) Quickly! Spread the word. Tell them to hide in caves, in hollow trees, anywhere they can!

(WHILE A FANFARE PLAYS TO ANNOUNCE THE ARRIVAL OF THE SHERIFF, THE STAGE BECOMES A SCENE OF GREAT COMMOTION. THE FIVE OF THEM, AIDED BY MIDGE RACE MADLY BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE STAGE, WARNING THE REST OF THE TOWN AND THE AUDIENCE, TOO, THAT THE SHERIFF IS COMING! PERHAPS EVEN MARIAN CROSSES ONCE OR TWICE TO ADD TO THE CONFUSION. WHILE THIS IS GOING ON, THE MUSIC GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER.)

ALL: Oh no! It's the Sheriff!
Hide the cow! And the plow!
Save the beans! And the greens!
Hide your log! Save the dog!
Hide your shovel! In your hovel!
Hide the bread! Save your head!
Hide the chickens and the ducks and the geese and the dishes!
ROBIN: HIDE EVERYTHING!
ALL: Oh, no! It's the Sheriff!

(THE FANFARE CONCLUDES WITH A FLOURISH, AND THE SHERIFF ARRIVES, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS DEPUTY, OSWALD, THE UNREADY.)

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