

**HOW ROBIN HOOD BECAME ROBIN HOOD,
AND HOW HE MET HIS FRIENDS,
HAD SEVERAL ADVENTURES, GAVE UP HIS OUTLAW LIFE,
& BECAME AN IMMORTAL ECONOMIC ROLE MODEL
ACT THE FIRST**

SCENE ONE [We meet Robin Hood. He kills a deer]

The lights come up upon a semi-circle of actors sitting on a bare stage.

*STORY TELLER WALKS IN (to DR) WITH A PILE OF PAPER----HE
READS THE TOP PAGE, WHICH IS THE LAST PAGE OF THE STORY----*

TELLER:And so, as he breathed his last breath on earth, Robin Hood pulled back his bow—yes, with his last bit of earthly strength our dear, dear Robin Hood pulled back his bow, and—

PETER: *(or someone else!)* Whoa, wait, that's the end of the play!

TELLER: What??

PETER: That's how the play ends! You gotta tell the story first---

TELLER: Oh...of course! Sorry. *(fixes pages)* Ladies and Gentleman, this is the story of Robin Hood. The bravest man in Britain, and perhaps the bravest man in the world. Robin Hood took from the Rich and gave to the Poor. The legend of Robin Hood will be remembered forever, all over the world----

It is the year eleven hundred and ninety-four! An uneasy peace lies over England. King Richard the first, Richard the Lionheart, is on his way back from the Crusades. The King's brother, Prince John, is sitting on the throne of England in Richard's place----growing rich on plunder! He is helped in the midlands by the Sheriff of Nottingham. Only one man stands between the Prince and the Sheriff, and their plot to steal as much money and land as they can before the return of King Richard. That man's name is.....

ALL: ROBIN HOOD!!! Yeah!!

TELLER: No archer ever lived who could shoot an arrow with such skill, and never were such yeoman as his merry band of one hundred and fifty men and women. All the band were outlaws, yet the country people loved them. No one who came to jolly Robin for help ever went away with an empty hand.

TELLER: But Robin Hood was not always an outlaw.

One bright morning when the sunbeams were shining through the leafy glades of Sherwood Forest....and the birds were trilling merry songs in the branches of the great oak trees...and the peaceful herd of Royal Deer were grazing in the underbrush....

Enter three royal knights (Sir Fredrick, Sir Albert, and Sir Percy) patrolling the forest to check up on the Royal Herd of Deer, by order of the Sheriff of Nottingham.

SIR FREDRICK: It has been several weeks since we captured a poacher to take before the king's sheriff.

SIR ALBERT: Aye, the chief forester gave orders yesterday that we must keep a sharp lookout! Only a few days ago a fine deer was slain!

SIR PERCY: I found three arrows in yonder glade!

SIR FREDRICK: Aha! Find me the churl who brought them into the greenwood. That would be worth talking about!

Enter Robin Hood, armed.

SIR PERCY: Hold! Who are you?

SIR ALBERT: And who gave you leave to walk so boldly through The King's Greenwood?!

ROBIN HOOD: I am Robert Fitztooth. I intend to do no harm in the forest-

SIR FREDRICK: No harm, indeed! No harm? What do you mean? You look well prepared for mischief to me!

ROBIN HOOD: I am on my way to Nottingham. I hope to take part in a great shooting match. I have heard that the Sheriff often holds archery contests. Some of the best bowmen and women from the North, South, East, and West are sure to be there!

SIR FREDRICK: And what of that? Surely you do not hope to measure your skill with the strong men who will draw the bow at the sheriff's shooting match! A stripling like you!

All three knights laugh and jeer at young Robert Fitztooth

ROBIN HOOD: That is exactly what I intend to do!

SIR FREDRICK: Come, take my advice and save yourself from disgrace-

SIR PERCY: Go back home and wait until you have a man's strength before you draw a man's bow!

ROBIN HOOD: I'll hold you twenty marks that I can hit any target set two score rods distant.

SIR ALBERT: Hear the youth brag!

ROBIN HOOD: Come! Choose me a target! And if I fail the mark, you may break my arrows, I'll give up the Nottingham shooting match, and you'll never hear of me again *(winks at audience)*.

SIR FREDRICK: Take him at his word, comrades. Place a target on yonder great oak trunk and humble this youngster in his pride. We'll send him home in haste if he fails to prove his boast!

Sir Albert fixes the target---Sir Frederick shoots, hits the target the closest of the three.

Note: all actors on stage have bows. But no arrows. Whenever an arrow is shot, everyone--audience included--says "twang! wsshhhh! thwack! boingggg!"

SIR PERCY: Come, youngster! What say you to that?

Robert shoots and comes closer to the center

Robert says nothing but notches his bow, shoots a second arrow and hits dead center

(the whole company shoots in sound as before)

SIR PERCY: It was a chance shot!

SIR ALBERT: I'll warrant he could not do it again.

ROBIN HOOD: Choose me another target, then.

A herd of deer come into view

SIR FREDRICK: *(points at the deer)* There is a target for you-

Robert shoots and hits the best deer, who bounds on to the stage and dies.

SIR PERCY: Oh, Dear. A royal hart is slain!

SIR ALBERT: You have broken the forest law!

SIR PERCY: Now get out of the greenwood or we'll punish you.

SIR FREDRICK: Nay, nay! Seize him! Seize him and bind him! He shall suffer for killing the King's deer!

TELLER: With a pang of terror Robert realized the mistake he had made.

Without thinking he had accepted the foresters challenge and had broken the forest law. What was to be done?

ROBIN HOOD: I must go hide in Sherwood Forest and become an outlaw—a solitary outlaw.

TELLER: And from that day forth he was no longer known as Robert Fitztooth, but as Robin Hood, the OUTLAW.

EVERYONE: Outlaw! Outlaw! Outlaw!

TELLER: Now, when Robin went into Sherwood Forest to hide from the Sheriff of Nottingham and his nasty foot soldiers, he intended to hide out alone. But in those far-off days, with King Richard not around, there were many, cruel, unjust laws, and a large number of outcasts --honest men and women--were forced to hide themselves in the greenwood. Some had poached on the game in the royal forest; others were Saxon slaves who had run away from severe Norman masters; still others had their homes burnt and their lands taken in order to enlarge the King's hunting grounds. Many of them were chased off their farms by the Sheriff's mean, nasty dogs!

(All run off, chased by dogs, and hide in the wings.)(they wait to come right back on.)

TELLER: For these reasons, bands of men and women were forced to live in the heart of the peaceful woods, and soon, Robin had two---he had three followers, he—

five. He had five followers—

seven, he had seven—

nine friends who—fourteen!

There were fourteen—followers!! And they were all hungry!

SCENE TWO [How can we Feed all the Followers?]

ROBIN HOOD: How are we going to FEED all these people?

TELLER: Start robbin', Robin.

ROBIN HOOD: Right.

TELLER: The King's Highway ran right—

ALL: King Richard?

TELLER: No! He was still away at the Crusades.

ALL: King John?

TELLER: NO! He was NOT the King! He was the King's brother.

PRINCE John. He was only the PRINCE. NOT the KING. He acted like the king, but--

ALL: Ohhhhh.

TELLER: Prince John, and the Sheriff of Nottingham--

TINKER: Hear ye! Hear ye! the Sheriff of Nottingham announces a GRAND COMPETITION of bow and arrow! Let all the greatest bowman and bow-women in the country--

ALL: NOT YET!!!

TINKER Oh. Sorry.

TELLER: Let me tell the story, Okay?? Now, on this Kings Highway--not named after any particular king, just kings in general--there were occasional knights, going from north to south, and from south to north--and that is how Robin's merry band survived, by robbery!

GILBERT: Robin, I think I have it all worked out--

ROBIN HOOD: Great, Gilbert. Fire away!

GILBERT: Assuming that the traveling knight carries about twenty pounds in gold, we should be able to buy enough food to feed us all if we rob one knight a day—

ROBIN HOOD: But, we don't BUY food, remember? We eat deer meat. Venison?

GILBERT: Right. But we need salt, oil, and spices, cheese, and bread, 'cause venison doesn't taste that good all by itself, and we need to send food and money to the poor. Not all of them are here with us.

ROBIN HOOD: Right. Good point.

GILBERT: So back to my calculations, Robin?

ROBIN HOOD: Yes?

GILBERT: I figure if we rob one knight a day—

ROBIN HOOD: A knight a day?

GILBERT: That's right.

ROBIN HOOD: Just one knight?

GILBERT: Yes.

ROBIN HOOD: A day?

GILBERT: Yes. A knight a day.

ROBIN HOOD: Have we robbed a knight, today?

GILBERT: No, Robin.

ROBIN HOOD: No robbin'??

GILBERT: No, Robin. No robbin' today. We robbed a knight last night.

ROBIN HOOD: Last night?

GILBERT: Right.

ROBIN HOOD: Oh. None since then?

GILBERT: No. That was our last knight.

ROBIN HOOD: Our last knight was last night?

GILBERT: Correct.

ROBIN HOOD: Last night's last knight was our last night?

GILBERT: Right.

ROBIN HOOD: And today?

GILBERT: No, Robin.

ROBIN HOOD: No robbin'?

GILBERT: None, sir, no knight has come.

ROBIN HOOD: Well, we'll just wait until the next night comes.

GILBERT: Yes. A knight may come.

ROBIN HOOD: When night comes?

GILBERT: Sir, night always comes.

ROBIN HOOD: Not night. I mean "Knight." A good Knight to rob.

GILBERT: Any night is a good night for robbin', Robin. You can rob a knight by night if you haven't robbed a knight by day.

ROBIN HOOD: And if there's no knight by day, or knight by night?

GILBERT: : There's always tomorrow, Sir

ROBIN HOOD: Tomorrow's knight?

GILBERT: That's right.

ROBIN HOOD: And if there's no knight today or tonight—do we have enough food for our merrye band?

GILBERT: Aye, Sir. We can last till tomorrow's knight. And of course, we can kill some more deer.

The merrye band kills some deer. Twang, wssshhh, etc.

SCENE THREE *[We meet Maid Marion]*

TELLER: When the weather was mild and pleasant, they slept on the moss and turf under the great trees; when the sharp wind whistled through the bare branches, they found shelter in the natural caves of the forest. Sometimes, when the evenings were long, they gathered under the TRYSTING TREE and had contests in archery or with quarterstaff. *Bring on Trysting Tree*

STRANGER: Um, Mister, uh, Mister Hood, may I speak to you for a moment?

ROBIN: Call me Robin.

STRANGER: Robin, this is my---er--- nephew. He is young. I must leave him in your care. His mother is no longer with us... Please promise me that you will take care of him. Make sure no harm comes to him. I must go and help King Richard come back to us soon.

ROBIN: But of course, how could I refuse this service to my King?

STRANGER: Thank you. Good-bye. *(whispers to the "nephew" and leaves)*
(nephew curtsies to Robin and goes off to join the merry men.)

TELLER: Robin Hood became their leader. He often went off by himself, exploring the forest, keeping an eye out for trouble—

MAID MARION *(who is disguised as the stranger's "nephew")* Excuse me--

TELLER: Yes?

MAID MARION: Um, you said that Robin Hood went off by himself?

TELLER: Yes, he always--

MAID MARION: I mean, does he have to go off alone?

TELLER: Well, I mean, he goes off to, you know, check things out in the forest, see how close the deer herd is, see if any knights are coming down on the King's Highway, set up a target, practice his archery....you don't stay the best bowman without practicing, you know....and, like they said, he was supposed to be a solitary night, and then, everyone came here, and so, he needs some space---

MAID MARION: Well, I want to go with him.

TELLER: Well you can't. You have to stay here. And it says here that he goes alone---

MAID MARION: Please?

TELLER: NO!

MAID MARION: My uncle is going to be very angry with Robin. He was supposed to never let me out of his sight.

TELLER: Well, your uncle's not here, and--

MAID MARION reveals her true identity, only to the TELLER----

TELLER: *(Whispers)*: Are you Maid Marion?

MARION nods.

TELLER: He went that-a-way.

MARION: Thank you. *(kisses him)*

TINKER: Hear ye! Hear ye! the Sheriff of Nottingham announces a GRAND COMPETITION of bow and arrow! Let all the greatest bowman and bow-women in the country--

ALL: NOT YET!!!

TINKER Oh. Sorry.

TELLER: So, Maid Marion left the Trysting Tree and followed Robin into the deep woods. But, when she spied what was about to happen, she hid behind a tree and just watched.

SCENE FOUR [We meet Little John]

ROBIN HOOD: Hello, there, Giant! Move over – I want to cross the bridge!

LITTLE JOHN: *(looking around from one place to another)* I think I hear a voice, but I don't see anyone!

ROBIN HOOD: You, I'm talkin' to YOU!

LITTLE JOHN: *(still pretending not to see ROBIN)*: Excuse me, I still don't see the source of that annoying voice!

ROBIN HOOD: *(taking out one of his arrows from his quiver)* Ha, ha! You have a clever tongue. Well, maybe you don't see me, but you'll soon feel me. Move – or I'll shoot you with my arrow.

LITTLE JOHN: Why, my little lad, will you shoot me with an arrow! I have only a stick – a quarterstaff. *(He takes out his stick that was tightened to his belt)* You are very brave!

ROBIN HOOD: Then I'll cut a stick for me too. *(He puts his arrow again in his quiver and leaves his bow on the ground. Someone hands him a stick)*

ROBIN HOOD: Thanks.

MAN: No problem.

LITTLE JOHN: Even a long stick won't help you, my young man. You're too little to fight me. Ha, ha.

ROBIN HOOD: You are laughing at me! Can you use your staff? We'll fight for the bridge. The one who falls into the river is the loser!

LITTLE JOHN: Ha ha, yes! I love a fight and I hope you love a bath!

ROBIN HOOD: Now we'll see who is going to laugh.

They start to fight, they are both quick and good with their weapons. After some time Little John hits Robin on the head; Robin's foot goes over the side of the bridge, and he falls into the river.

LITTLE JOHN: Are you hurt? Do you want help?

ROBIN HOOD: Oh no, thanks! I'm just swimming a little. I love swimming. That was a good fight. You're a strong man. Can I do anything for you? Do you need some help?

LITTLE JOHN: Do I need help? Hah hah hah! You're the one who needs help!

ROBIN HOOD: I mean, is there anything I can DO for you?

LITTLE JOHN: Oh. *(thinking)* Well, yes, you can help me find Robin Hood. I want to be one of his men. I hate injustice and I hate Prince John, and I hate the Sheriff of Rotting Ham, and I love a good fight.

ROBIN HOOD: Just follow me. I will bring you right where Mister Hood is. I have known him all my life!

(they return together to the trysting tree. unknown, MAID MARION is following....)

ALL: Yayy, Robin Hood is back!

LITTLE JOHN: But, are YOU Robin Hood? THE Robin Hood?

ROBIN: Well, yes, I guess I am. Hey everybody--welcome the newest member of our merry band! Um, excuse me, I do not know your name.

LITTLE JOHN: Little. John Little.

ALL: Let's call him Little John. Yayyy!

ROBIN: Yep, he's big, and he is strong, but I bested him in man-to-man combat! Right, Little John?

LITTLE JOHN: *(hesitating, then winking)* You what? Oh. That's right, Robin.

MARION: *(still in disguise)* Uh Robin, why are your clothes all wet?

ALL: Oooooooooo.

ROBIN: Well,.....

MARION: Little John's outfit is perfectly dry!

ALL: Oooooooooo.

ROBIN: Well, I,

MARION: You didn't go for an unexpected swim, did you?

ROBIN: Yeah, I like to swim, you know--

MARION: In your clothes? With your hat on?

ALL: Oooooooooo.

ROBIN: Well, I may have SLIPPED a little off the bridge while I was waiting for John to, you know, feel better, lick his wounds---

MARION: Oh, Robin, what's that big bump on your head?

ALL: Oooooooooo---

ROBIN: Well, I, *(he looks to Little John for help: no help there)*

MARION: Did Little John hit you with his big, big stick?

ALL: Ooooooo...

WILL: Robin, why are you taking all that abuse from that pipsqueak?

ALL: Yeah, why don't you teach him a lesson?

ROBIN: Look, you---- *(he grabs nephew and pulls him aside. they argue heatedly in gibberish that the audience can almost hear and understand, with lots of gesturing. The argument escalates into a very equal physical confrontation. Finally ROBIN gets really angry and hurls his own hat on the ground. Nephew does the same. Revealing his (her!!) long long hair! Now Robin understands that the nephew is really a young woman.)*

TELLER: And so, our great leader finally met his match.

TINKER: Hear ye! Hear ye! the Sheriff of Nottingham announces a GRAND COMPETITION of bow and arrow! Let all the greatest bowman and bow-women in the country--

ALL: NOT YET!!!

TINKER Oh. Sorry.

SCENE FIVE [An Unfortunate Knight Eats a Meal]

TELLER: Now this is the way that Robin and his merry band robbed the knights who passed on the King's Highway...

WATCHER: Hey, everyone, I just saw a knight coming down the King's Highway!!

ROBIN HOOD: Is he nearby?

WATCHER: You bet, Robin, we'd better hurry!

(All yawn and act very much NOT in a hurry)

LITTLE JOHN: And what kind of a knight is he, pray tell?

WATCHER: Well---He looks really rich!

LITTLE JOHN: Is he alone?

WATCHER: Yes, all alone.

LITTLE JOHN: What, he doesn't have a whole bunch of warriors and bodyguards with him?

WATCHER: No, Sir!

LITTLE JOHN: Well, that's no fun then. Somebody else go invite him for dinner.

VOLUNTEERS: Oooo, Oooo! We'll go.

LITTLE JOHN: Don't be long now. I'll go tell the cook.

(Music is played. No one stirs. The Unfortunate Knight is brought in.)

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: How dare you kidnap me! I, I must be allowed back on the Highway. I have important business to take care of. Just you wait till Prince John hears about this!

ROBIN HOOD: Oh, how insulting! Kidnap you! Why, what must you think of us? We are only inviting you to a splendid outdoor dinner, and then you'll be right back on your way--

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: Oh, well, then, I mean, I'm sorry for the offense, I--

ROBIN HOOD: You are forgiven. We'll just say it's a misunderstanding, shall we? Among friends?

(It is ironic to call it a misunderstanding, as all the archers are standing with their arrows aimed right at the UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT's heart.)

MARION: Now then, Good Knight

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: Good night?

MARION. No! You! Good Knight, what would you like to order?

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: Well, what do you have?

MARION: Well, you get the chef's special, right, cook?

COOK: That's right!

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: ---and that is...?

MARION: Today it's, um, venison soup, venison salad, venison tacos, venison burgers, roast venison, venison pod thai--

COOK: We're outa the pod thai!

MARION: ---deep fried venison, venison upside down cake, venison smoothie, and venison jello--

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: Venison jello? But that sounds awful!

MARION: *(in an awful shriek)* HOLD THE VENISON JELLO!!

(A plate is handed to the UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT. He scarfs it all down. Meanwhile all the arrows are still pointed at him. While he is eating a couple of knights search his horse, saddlebags, pockets, and count all the money: two hundred and twenty five pounds!)

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: Thank you, that was delicious, really--

MARION *(bored)*: Everything always tastes better on a camping trip.

ROBIN: *(whispering behind him---)* How much money does he have?

His friends tell him with gestures.

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: So, how much do I owe you? *(beginning to reach for his pocket)*

MARION: That'll be 225 pounds.

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: 225 pounds!!!! Why, that's HIGHWAY ROBBERY!

ALL: Uh-huh.

TELLER: Now, it came to pass that the Sheriff of Nottingham heard more and more news about how Robin Hood and his merry band were making life miserable for the knights on the King's highway.

UNFORTUNATE KNIGHT: Actually, I am not that miserable. It was a lovely meal. I've eaten at more expensive restaurants than that. And I have

plenty more money where that came from. Actually, I would have a lot more but I've had to declare bankruptcy four times. But, I have a big, I mean really BIG real estate deal about to go down in Nottingham---

TINKER: Hear ye! Hear ye! the Sheriff of Nottingham announces a GRAND COMPETITION of bow and arrow! Let all the greatest bowman and bow-women in the country--

ALL: NOT YET!

TINKER: Sorry.

SCENE SIX [We meet Prince John & his crew]

TELLER: Now, Robin Hood and his merry band made mischief. They protected the farmers from the soldiers of Prince John. They used the money they made from the chef's special, and gave it to the poor so they could pay the rent and buy food when their crops had been stolen and trampled. The Sheriff and the Prince were becoming very upset!

(the set is turned around, revealing the sheriff's patio...)
(Prince John, Lord Dunstan, the Sheriff, the Sheriff's wife....)

PRINCE JOHN: Sheriff, I thought I gave you the order long ago to round up this, this, Robin Hood.

SHERIFF: Yes, well, that's all very easy for you to say. He's not an easy man to round up.

PRINCE JOHN. And why is that? He's an OUTLAW.

SHERIFF: Well, the people protect him. He is some sort of a legend. They think he protects them from harm.

PRINCE JOHN: Well, we just need to bring him here. To our turf. Let's not waste our time trying to root him out of the forest.

SHERIFF: Well, how do your propose to do that?

PRINCE JOHN: Well, I don't know.

SHERIFF: Do you know, Lord Dunstan?

LORD DUNSTAN: I just don't know.

PRINCE JOHN: Well then, I guess that's it. We're stumped. We're out of

ideas before we even had one!

SHERIFF'S WIFE: Oh no! I have an idea.

SHERIFF: You? You do?

SHERIFF'S WIFE. Yes, I have a plan!

PRINCE JOHN: (*bored, with low expectation*): Well, let us hear it then.

SHERIFF'S WIFE.: These outlaws claim to be the best archers in the whole country!

SHERIFF: And their claim is a true one---

LORD DUNSTAN: Well, except for me, of course.

SHERIFF'S WIFE.: Well, let it be proclaimed that a great shooting match will be held in Nottingham town on May Day. Offer a fine prize to the best archer. Robin Hood and his men will certainly attend. They won't dare to stay away.

PRINCE JOHN: A very shrewd idea, Madam Sheriff. How did you ever think about that?

SHERIFF'S WIFE.: Well, it's very strange, it's as if I heard a voice at my ear--

TINKER: Oooo, oooo! That was me! I gave you the idea! Me! Me! Mine!

ALL: Shhhhhhh.

LORD DUNSTAN: A wonderful idea, Madam.

SHERIFF: My wife is the cleverest woman in Nottinghamshire.

LORD DUNSTAN: I'd like to have Robin Hood here. Why, I could show him a thing or two about shooting a bow and arrow. Ha!

PRINCE JOHN: Yes, I am sure you could----

SHERIFF: Hmmm. let us consider her plan. I'll have to send out a trusted messenger, a person of the utmost integrity, someone I can trust---(*all this while the Tinker is leaping up and down trying to get the Sheriff's attention*)-- to find out where Robin Hood is, and proclaim the greatest shooting match that ever was! The prize shall be an arrow of rare worth and beauty, golden with rich red feathers--

SHERIFF'S WIFE: And let the winner be named the greatest archer in all England!

LORD DUNSTAN: That would be ME, of course. Let's see, I'll take that

prize, and you'll capture Robin Hood--it will be a grand day for all of us!

PRINCE JOHN: I congratulate you. I believe we have at last found a way to capture those rascals, all of them! They'll all come, you may be sure. My soldiers will round them all up and clap 'em in the dungeon--

SHERIFF: Tomorrow I will send the word. Now if I can only find a most dependable messenger--

TINKER: Me! Me! *(as the set turns around again to the Trysting Tree...)*

SCENE SEVEN [We meet Will Scarlet]

TELLER: That same afternoon, Robin Hood and Maid Marion were strolling through the fine glades of the forest. They were talking about their merry life in the woods.

ROBIN: Marion, you are now as clever with the longbow and arrow as with your oaken staff.

MARION: Thank you, Robin, you are--

They may be about to kiss. They are interrupted:

TINKER: Hear ye, hear ye! The Sheriff of Nottingham announces a contest for the greatest archers in—

ALL: Not yet!!!

TINKER: But—

ALL: NOT YET!!! He hasn't even asked you yet!

TINKER: Fine!

TELLER: The friends walked on in silence until a turn in the road brought into full view a large herd of deer grazing.

MAID MARION: What a splendid sight! 'Tis the finest herd I've seen for many a day.

(they're looking right at the audience. saying things like, oh what a fine buck, oh what a sweet little fawn, what a lovely doe!

Enter Will dressed in brilliant scarlet garments.

MAID MARION: *(looking at the deer)* Look! Does the noble hart scent danger?

ROBIN: He does indeed, my friend. Do you not see the gaily dressed hunter

standing near yonder great oak tree? I declare he is stringing his bow!

TELLER: Marion and Robin saw a tall, slender youth standing near a thick coppice. His doublet and stockings were of scarlet silk, and a broad scarlet feather curled along his jaunty black velvet cap. In his hand was---

ROBIN & MARION---Um, excuse me---

TELLER: Yes? What is it?

MARION: You don't really need to tell that.

TELLER: But....

MARION: We're like standing right here, and there he is over there, I mean, anyone can see--so....

TELLER (*starts to cry.*) But, those are my only lines, and my mommy and daddy are here, and my gram, and they're all so proud of me, and and, this is the first play I was ever in, and all I want to do is--

ROBIN: Geez, okay, fine. (*gets angry w. Marion*)

MARION: Fine. Okay. Tell the story. We're ---all ears. Fine.

TELLER: I can't remember what I was supposed to say!

MARION: "...Greenwood hunter, funny outfit..."

TELLER shakes head and can't continue, too upset.

MAID MARION: He's a funny looking greenwood hunter. He would make a good target for one of the royal foresters.

ROBIN: No doubt. Lincoln green is the safest color for a Sherwood hunter. Surely he is master of the bow, Marion. See, he holds it as deftly as one of my yeomen. I wonder who he is! Step into the coppice for a few moments and I will slip along quietly and question him.

MARION does not move.

ROBIN: What's the matter?

MARION: Um, I don't know a coppice is.

ROBIN: Oh, Sorry. A coppice is a bunch of little trees. A thicket. Okay, come into the thicket with me.

MARION: (*loudly*) You want **me** to go into the thicket with **you**?

ROBIN: SHHHH. (*motions her to come and hide...*)

WILL: Now I'll have one of you for my dinner!

Will shoots the best deer of the herd. Deer staggers on to stage and dies.

ROBIN: Well shot! Well shot! You have struck the leader of the herd. You know well how to allow for the light breeze! Will you be one of my yeoman, good youth?

WILL: Why do you speak to me, sir? Are you a forester?

ROBIN: I am indeed. The chief forester of Sherwood.

WILL: Then I will have nothing to do with you. *(Starts to leave)*

ROBIN: Hold! Stand where you are and answer my questions. Tell me quickly, lad. Why did you come into the greenwood?

WILL: To seek a cousin of mine who men call Robin Hood! Can you help me find him, good forester?

Robin examines the youth, then clasps the youth in his arms tenderly

ROBIN: Ah! You are my mother's great-aunt's sister's daughter Gamwell's child! She died when you were a lad of five years. I am Robin Hood, my boy.

WILL: Robin Hood! My cousin Robin Hood!

ROBIN: I am proud of your skill! But tell me lad, why are you seeking me in the greenwood?

WILL: Because the best part of my land has been stolen by a Norman baron whose estate joins mine. You know well, cousin, what injustice we Saxons suffer under Prince John's tyranny! I want to join your merry band and fight for justice!

ALL: Yeah!!

ROBIN: In the greenwood, my lad, you will find justice, and perfect peace. I am glad you have come.

Marion steps out of the coppice

MAID MARION: You have tarried a long while, Robin. Are you ready to go?

ROBIN: Come forward, Marion. I have pleasant news for you. This youth is Will Gamwell, a cousin of mine, who has come to live with us in the greenwood.

MAID MARION: I am glad to welcome you.

WILL: Pleased to make your acquaintance, miss. *(to the TELLER)*: And who's this?

TELLER: Oh, no one. I'm just the story teller.

WILL: Well you're doin' a nice job. Although, you coulda brought me in a little earlier. What is this, page twenty-five?

TELLER: Seventeen

WILL: Oh, okay.

MAID MARION: Ahem. You handle the longbow with great skill, young Will Gamwell.

WILL: Thank you, and may I donate this deer for dinner tonight?

ROBIN: Indeed you may. But if you come to the greenwood you must have a new name. What shall it be?

MAID MARION: Well, it's easy to guess his favorite color! Why not call him Scarlet?

ROBIN: Scarlet! Will Scarlet! Well chosen, Lady Marion! Cousin, from this day you shall be know as Will Scarlet, and I name you my chief advisor next to Marion---(*others in the semi-circle complain.*)

LITTLE JOHN: HEY!!

GILBERT: WHAT'S WITH THAT, MAN?

FRIAR TUCK: Robin, what about me? (*Tuck is both introduced and let go.*)

ROBIN: Okay, okay, he'll be one of my chief advisors! Come, let us go to the Trysting Tree and join the rest of our merry band! Tonight you shall see for yourself the bountiful revelry of a Sherwood feast!

TELLER: So, Robin Hood and Maid Marion and their new friend, Will Scarlet, marched off together back to the Trysting Tree.

MARION: They KNOW that. That's what we're doing.

ROBIN: SHHHHH.

TELLER almost weeps again. (a little traveling music.)

ROBIN: Look, friends. Here is the newest member of our merry band, my cousin, Will Scarlet! All give him a hearty welcome.

ROBIN: He will be a great addition to our family. And, he has killed a fine and meaty deer for our dinner tonight.

ALL: Yayy! Hooray for Will Scarlet! Thank you, Mister Will! Yayyy!

WILL: Um, Robin?

ROBIN: Yes, dear cuz--

WILL: Uh, did you bring the deer?

ROBIN: What deer, Dear?

WILL: The dead deer!

ROBIN: (*to Marion*) Did one of our deer die, Dear?

WILL: ...cause I didn't. I mean, we were talking, and I got distracted, and I don't think I have it.

ROBIN: Oh. That deer, Dear. Marion, did you bring the dead deer, Dear?

MAID MARION: Oh, dear. What deer? The dead deer?

ROBIN: Right. The deer Will killed.

MARION: Oh, dear. That dead deer. Dear me, My dears, there's no deer here.

ALL show--loudly-- great consternation, upset, and hunger!

WILL: I'm sorry----

MERRY MAN: *(running in breathlessly from downstage center)* WAIT! WAIT! It's okay! Don't worry! There's food! Lots of it! Out there!!

ROBIN: What? What?

MERRY MAN *(also running in breathlessly)*: They're serving ice cream, out in the lobby--Hot fudge sundaes! They're awesome! And they're ready right now!!

ALL: Yayyyyyy! *(they get up to start to run off stage down center)*

MERRY MAN: BUT WAIT!!

MAID MARION: What? Wait for what?

MERRY MAN: You need money. They're not free. You have to BUY the sundaes. I mean, make a donation. They're raising money for the scholarship fund!!

ROBIN: Oh. No problem. Grab a bag of gold and let's go!

One of the band leads the charge with a bag of gold. All the actors run off downstage center. The house lights come up.

MAID MARION: *(or other) (to the audience)* You all come, too!
music up, house lights:

INTERMISSION

ACT THE SECOND

SCENE EIGHT [Allen-a-Dale]

The second half begins with a traditional English ballad, recited by our company. The merry band react to the action in the reading.

COME listen to me, you gallants so free,
 All you that love mirth for to hear,
 And I will tell you of a bold outlâw,
 That lived in Nottinghamshire.

As Robin Hood in the forest stood
 All under the greenwood tree,
 There he was aware of a brave young man,
 As fine as fine might be.

Said Robin, "I wonder about this man--
 So drooping he comes this way."
 And at every step he fetched a sigh,
 "Alas! and a well-a-day!"

Then steppèd forth brave Little John,
 And Will, and Marion;
 Which made the young man bend his bow,
 When as he see them come.

"Stand off! stand off!" the young man said,
 "What is your will with me?"
 "You must come before our master straight,
 Under yon greenwood tree."

And when he came bold Robin before,
 Robin asked him courteously,
 O, hast thou any money to spare,
 For my merry men and me?

"I have no money," the young man said,
 "But five shillings and a ring;
 And that I have kept this seven long years,
 To have at my wedding.

"Yesterday I should have married a maid,
 But she was from me ta'en,
 And chosen to be an old knight's delight,
 Whereby my poor heart is slain."

"What is thy name?" then said Robin Hood,
 "Come tell me, without any fail."
 "By the faith of my body," then said the young man,
 "My name it is Allen-a-Dale."

"What wilt thou give me," said Robin Hood,
 "In ready gold or fee,
 To help thee to thy true love again,
 And deliver her unto thee?"

"I have no money," then quoth the young man,
 "No ready gold nor fee,
 But I will swear upon the book
 Thy true servant for to be."

"How many miles is it to thy true love?
 Come tell me without guile."

"By the faith of my body," then said the young man,
 "It is but five little mile."

Then Robin he hasted from the wood,
 Through the meadow and o'er the lea,
 Until he came unto the church
 Where this wedding was to be.

He spied come in a wealthy knight,
 Who was both grave and old;
 And after him a beautiful lass,
 Who shone like the glistening gold.

"This is no fit match," quoth Robin Hood,
 "That you do seem to make here;
 For since we are come into the church,
 The bride shall choose her own dear."

Then Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth,
 And blew blasts two and three;
 When four-and-twenty bowmen bold
 Came leaping over the lea.

And when they came into the church-yard,
 Marching all in a row,
 The first man was young Allen-a-Dale,
 To give bold Robin his bow.
 "This is thy true love," Robin he said,
 Young Allen, as I hear say;
 And you shall be married this same time,
 Before we depart away."
 "That shall not be," the bishop he cried,
 "For thy word shall not stand;
 They shall be three times asked in the church,
 As the law is of our land."
 Then Robin Hood pulled off the bishop's coat,
 And put it upon Little John;
 "By the faith of my body," then Robin said,
 "This cloth doth make thee the man."
 When Little John went into the quire,
 The people began to laugh;
 He asked them seven times into church,
 Lest three times should not be enough.
 "Who gives me this maid?" said Little John,
 Quoth Robin Hood, "That do I;
 And he that takes her from Allen-a-Dale,
 Full dearly he shall her buy."
 And then having ended this merry wedding,
 The bride looked like a queen;
 And so they returned to the merry greenwood,
 Amongst the leaves so green.
All the balladeers strike a pose, bow, and accept applause.
 ALLEN: Thank you, Robin Hood, for helping me marry my bride.
 ROBIN HOOD: Oh, it was nothing!

SCENE NINE [The Allen-A-Dale Tale Told as a Puppet Show]

LITTLE JOHN: Let's have a celebration!

ALL: Yayyyyyyy!

ROBIN HOOD: Well, I suppose we could have a puppet show!

ALL: Puppet show! Puppet show! Puppet show! Puppet show! Puppet show!

Puppet show! Puppet show! Puppet show!

The puppet show is presented. It is a marionette performance given by the Master Puppeteer, and six marionettes, in the roles of Allen-a -Dale, Robin Hood, the Bishop, Little John, the Old Man, and the Young Bride, and accompanied by our musician. A man and a woman from the Merrye Band stand beside the Master Puppeteer, and speak the lines of the puppets, as...

PUPPET ROBIN: I wonder about this man. Who could he be?

ALLEN PUPPET: Stand off, what is your will with me?

LITTLE JOHN PUPPET: You must come before my master.

ALLEN PUPPET: Okay.

ROBIN PUPPET: What is the matter?

ALLEN PUPPET: Oh, Robin, my one true love is about to be married to an ugly old man!

ROBIN PUPPET: Oh. We must stop this wedding right now!

ALLEN PUPPET: Oh, yes. Please.

LITTLE JOHN PUPPET: Let's go!

OLD MAN PUPPET: Oh, ho, my pretty young thing. We will be husband and wife today!

BRIDE PUPPET: No! No!

OLD MAN PUPPET: Ha ha ha ha ha ha---

BRIDE PUPPET: No! No!

ROBIN PUPPET: Is this the young woman?

ALLEN PUPPET: Oh yes! How I love her! Do something!

ROBIN PUPPET blows his horn!

BISHOP PUPPET: Who are you? And what are you doing here?

ALLEN PUPPET: This is my bride. She loves me. I come to marry her!

OLD MAN: Oh, no you don't!

ALLEN PUPPET: Oh yes I do!

BISHOP PUPPET: Oh, no you don't!

ROBIN PUPPET: Oh, yes he does! In Sherwood Forest the woman gets to choose!

LITTLE JOHN PUPPET: I now pronounce you husband and wife!

The Two Young Puppets embrace.

ALL: Yayyyyyy!

MAID MARION: A dance! A dance!

The Puppet show having ended, the Company now engage in a brief dance of springtime, freedom, and young love. When the dance ends, everyone is expecting the TINKER's announcement. He is sleeping.

SCENE TEN [The Archery Contest Announced]

ALL: Now! You! It's time for your announcement!

TINKER: Wha, what? What announcement?

MAID MARION: Your message from the Sheriff of Nottingham.

TINKER: *(still sleepily confused)* The Sheriff of Nottingham?

ALL: Yes!!!!!!!

TINKER: Oh, THAT Sheriff. Um, uh,

ALL: Yeah?

TINKER: Hear ye! Hear ye! the Sheriff of Nottingham announces a GRAND COMPETITION of bow and arrow! Let all the greatest bowman and bowwomen in the country COME TO NOTTINGHAM ON MAY-DAY! A shooting Match!! To see who is the best, the greatest archer in all of Eng-a-Land!!! A golden arrow to the winner! And a dance with the QUEEN OF THE MAY!

ALL: Wow.

ROBIN HOOD: Really?

WILL: Well, why hold the contest at all? Everyone in England knows that the greatest archer in the whole world lives right here in Sherwood Forest.

LITTLE JOHN: I wonder if Harold o' Lincoln will be there. People say he is wonderfully skilled with the longbow.

MERRY MAN: I'll warrant Prince John will be there. And, that creepy Lord Dunstan, who thinks he can shoot better than anyone...

ROBIN HOOD: Well, shall we then?

MAID MARION: Shall we what, Robin?

ROBIN HOOD: Go to this shooting match. Let's several of us attend. It will be a grand contest of skill. And wouldn't you like the gift of a golden arrow, my dear?

MAID MARION: I'm afraid it would be dangerous sport, for you, Robin. It sounds like a trap.

ROBIN HOOD: Is it a trap, Mister Tinker?

TINKER: Oh, it is indeed, Robin; it's a trap to catch YOU! They mean to seize you and throw you into a dungeon forever.

ALL: Oooohhh!

MAID MARION: You see?

TINKER: You know, I don't think I was supposed to tell you that.

ROBIN HOOD: Oh no. You did the right thing, Mister Tinker. And anyway, we need someone to live with us and fix our pots and pans. Don't we?

ALL: Yayyyy!

MERRY MAN: Welcome to our Merry Band!

MERRY WOMAN: Welcome to Sir Pots and Pans!

ALL: Pots and Pans! Pots and Pans! Pots and Pans! Pots and Pans!

TINKER: Aw, thank you. Shucks.

TELLER: And so, the jolly Tinker joined Robin Hood's Merry Band and became--

ALL: We KNOW THAT!

TELLER: Fine. Okay.

ROBIN: Maid Marion, Little John, all of you, lads and lasses, there is no danger. I suspected the Sheriff's trick, but it must not be said that the Sheriff of Nottingham can frighten Robin Hood. Nor that I fear to look Prince John in the eye. I am sure I can defend myself. However, let any who are afraid to go, stay here in the forest.

LITTLE JOHN: I'll go!

WILL: I'll go!

ALL: We'll all go! Yayyyyyy!

TELLER: I'll go!

LITTLE JOHN: Let us go in disguise, and mingle with the crowd.

MAID MARION: No one knows ME in Nottingham. I will plant myself next to the Sheriff and the Prince. To hear what I can hear!

ROBIN: If you get that close to the Sheriff, he'll make you the Queen of the May!

MAID MARION: And you will win the shooting contest and I'll dance with you in front of the Prince and the Sheriff!

ALL: Yayy!

MERRY MAN: Three cheers for the shooting match in Nottingham!

WILL: Three cheers for Robin Hood, master archer of all England!

MERRY WOMAN: Three cheers for Marion! Bravest of all women!

TINKER: Hear ye! Hear ye!

ALL: SHHHHHHHH!

(a hush is called for as the set of the Trysting Tree is being turned around to reveal the Sheriff, his wife, the Prince, and Lord Dunstan...)

SCENE ELEVEN [The Archery Contest!]

PRINCE JOHN: What were you saying, Ma'am?

SHERIFF'S WIFE: I was saying, there's not a keener man in all Nottinghamshire than the sheriff, my husband.

SHERIFF: Oh, well, I try--

SHERIFF'S WIFE: I'm sure our scheme to catch the outlaw will succeed, for he wouldn't turn away from such a challenge! Oh, what a day of rejoicing we shall have when Sherwood forest is freed forever from that outlaw and his scurvy band!

SHERIFF : *(speaking to Lord Dunstan)* I know Robin Hood thinks he's very good with a bow and arrow. He'll come to the contest, and I'll catch him. Ha, ha.

LORD DUNSTAN: Are you sure? He would be quite stupid, don't you think so?

SHERIFF: Ha, ha, he will come. He is too proud of himself.

PRINCE JOHN: Yes, and all those times we rode around the forest, rather than risk our lives by going in there?--now those tormenting rogues will come right to our clutches without our having to lift a finger.

LORD DUNSTAN: Tell me, who did you find who was brave enough, and trustworthy enough, to carry the message into Sherwood Forest?

SHERIFF: Oh, a tinker of sharp intelligence and wit, who swore he feared nothing! A most trustworthy man, if I do say.... He said, "Sheriff, if I can't get Robin Hood to come to Nottingham, why, I'll cudgel the man himself with a cast iron pan!"

SHERIFF'S WIFE: Oh, what a brave man! And, you were so wise to hire him!

SHERIFF: Oh, it was nothing----

enter Maid Marion in disguise.

MAID MARION: Message for the Sheriff of Nottingham! Does anyone know where he is?

SHERIFF: What is it, young lady?

MAID MARION: Oh, my dear Sheriff, I came to warn you! Your tinker has joined Robin Hood's band!

SHERIFF, PRINCE, LORD, WIFE: No!

MAID MARION: Yes!

SHERIFF, PRINCE, LORD, WIFE: No!

ALL: YESSS!

SHERIFF: The rascal!

PRINCE JOHN: The scallywag!

SHERIFF: I have just got done saying, You can't trust a tinker. They're a bad lot! Wicked! I would never put my trust in a tinker.

LORD DUNSTAN: But, you just did! That's not what you said at all.

PRINCE JOHN: Lord Dunstan, that was most uncalled-for.

SHERIFF: Did he at least deliver the announcement?

MAID MARION: Oh, yes! I mean, I think so, sir. I mean, I am told he did. Good day.

(she starts to leave...)

SHERIFF: Wait. Stay here. We may have some use for a person like you.

SHERIFF'S WIFE: We may?

SHERIFF: Yes. I have said. *(the merry men and women appear, all disguised.)* Tell me, Young Lady, do you know what Robin Hood looks like? If you can tell me that, I'll make you the Queen of the May!

SHERIFF'S WIFE: But, I--

MAID MARION: Oh, no, Sir, I don't think so...

SHERIFF: Hmmm. Soldier!!

SOLDIER: *(the soldier approaches the Sheriff)* Yes, sir!

SHERIFF: Do you see Robin Hood anywhere?

SOLDIER: *(looking around stupidly)* No, sir, he isn't here.

SHERIFF: *(speaking loudly)* Then he's not only a villain – he's a coward too! Well, Let the contest begin. (to Marion): You stay here.

PRINCE JOHN: Are you sure no one can hear what we say? It seems this Robin Hood is always one step ahead of us. It's as if he had eyes and ears among us. Could one of your servants be a friend of these outlaws?

SHERIFF: Unthinkable! *(To Marion)* Is it not?

MAID MARION: Absolutely, Sir!

All the participants stand next to the other.

CRIER: Archers, make ready, and at the sound of the trumpet, shoot! Each contestant will shoot at the target only once.

The soldier blows a trumpet.

All the gathered archers start shooting at the target. Robin Hood is disguised as a one-eyed peasant. Twang! Wssh! etc. After the first rounds, The three finalists are Robin, Little John and Lord Dunstan.

CRIER: The three best contestants will now shoot for the golden arrow.

Archers make ready, and at the sound of the trumpet let the next round begin!

SHERIFF: And Robin Hood isn't one of them. He's a coward. *(speaking to Maid Marion)*. He is too much of a coward to come!

PRINCE JOHN: Are the guardians ready to seize the outlaw leader and his band, if they appear?

SHERIFF: Oh yes! My soldiers are everywhere, ready to jump on him. If he comes, there isn't a chance he could escape.

SHERIFF WIFE: I hope he will come. I'd like to see him try to beat these fellows. He cannot match them!

PRINCE JOHN: Ah, he's afraid to show his face!

Trumpet is blown. The contestants get ready.

MAID MARIAN: Sir, he is a good archer, this one-eyed man.

SHERIFF WIFE: Oh, and the big handsome one is a good archer too.

CRIER: Archer one, ready to shoot. Your name?

LITTLE JOHN: John of the Forest!

CRIER: John of the Forest!

ALL: Yayyyyy!

Little John shoots.

LITTLE JOHN-- Look! right close to the center!

LORD DUNSTAN: It's a good shot, but I'll do better.

LITTLE JOHN: Do you think so?

CRIER: Archer two, ready to shoot. Gentlemen: His Lordship, Lord Dunstan!!

ALL: Booooo!

Lord Dunstan shoots. Lord Dunstan laughs happily. It has hit the black spot.

SOLDIER: Lord Dunstan hit the black spot. No one can shoot better than this. The match is over.

ROBIN HOOD: True, it was a good shot. But I can still try my poor bow against it.

SHERIFF: Yes, let the stranger shoot. He can't get any closer, but we have to be fair. We are known for our fairness. Let him try.

ROBIN HOOD: I thank you, good sheriff. You're very fair. *(making a reverence to the Sheriff. Robin raises his bow--*

CRIER: Archer number three, ready. Your name, Sir?

ROBIN HOOD: Robert of the Green!

CRIER: Robert of the Green!

ALL: Yayyyyy! Robert! Robert! Robert! Robert! Robert! Robert! Robert!

Robin Hood shoots--

PRINCE JOHN: *(very surprised)* I never saw shooting like this before!

LORD DUNSTAN: My arrow is split into pieces! This man--whoever he is-- must be the best archer in all England.

SHERIFF: Stranger, you have won the golden arrow

ALL: Yayyyyy! Robert! Robert! Robert! Robert! Robert! Robert! Robert! Robert!

SHERIFF WIFE: I am sorry not to see that coward Robin Hood here. Robert of the Green, I proclaim you champion, and the greatest archer in merry England! *She hands the arrow to Maid Marian ,who gives the golden arrow to Robin, and she winks at him.*

ROBIN: Thank you, ma'am. It has been a pleasure to meet you. *(He bows and kisses her hand very carefully).*

SHERIFF: *(The sheriff approaches Robin)* Stranger, you shoot very well. I can use a man like you, Robert of the Green. Will you work for me?

ROBIN: I'm sorry, sir, but I'm busy with other work.

SHERIFF: *(angrily)* Consider it well. An offer from the Sheriff of Nottingham doesn't come every day. What other work can be more important than serving me?

ROBIN: Oh, but I DO serve you, Sir. I guard your forest. I watch over your herd of Royal Deer. I think about you all the time. In all my actions, I consider you.

SHERIFF: Hmmmm. Well, yes, I see what you mean. Off with you, then.

ALL: NO! Booo! First the dance! The dance of the King and the Queen of the May!

Robin approaches the stage and takes Marion's hand. The Sheriff must let them dance.

ROBIN: I salute you, Sheriff, for choosing such an excellent May Queen. Strike up, players!

A Maypole is erected. All the outlaws grab a streamer and dance in two directions as the music plays. Little John dances with the Sheriff's wife.

Flushed after the dance--Marion approaches the Sheriff.

SHERIFF: I like not this fellow's proud manner. Upstart shooter, not work for me. . . .King of the May---

MAID MARION: Sir, I will follow this stranger. I will find out for you where he lives.

SHERIFF: Excellent idea. Do that. *(the company leaves.)* Drat! I wanted a prize for myself today: the head of Robin Hood. Well, that coward will soon hear about this one-eyed stranger. Best archer in England: Ha! *(talking in a cynical way).*

*Suddenly an arrow nearly hits the Sheriff on the head. It has a note fixed to it
The sheriff starts reading the note:*

SHERIFF: (reads) "Dear Sheriff, Here is my eye-patch. maybe you will see better with one eye. Thank you for the golden arrow, Robin Hood, King of the May." Nooo! Nooooooo! He tricked me! He laughed at me!

The Sheriff leaves the stage angrily, throwing the piece of paper on the floor. Lord Dunstan picks up the discarded eye patch, and tries it on, to see if it indeed helps his shooting. He tries it, and the arrow goes way off to the side. Music.

SCENE TWELVE [King Richard Comes Home!]

TELLER: Now, for years a shaky balance held in the Midlands. Prince John was hated, but he made it possible for many Normans to grow wealthy and strong. Meanwhile the Saxon farmers and peasants suffered. Their lives would have been much worse without Robin Hood and his merry men.

ALL: Hooray for Robin Hood!

TELLER: It was during these years--after the great Tournament-- that all the favorite stories about Robin Hood began and were passed down. Robin Hood and Friar Tuck, Robin and Maid Marion, Robin and the Jolly Butcher, Robin Hood meets the Queen---

It's very important for everyone to know, of course, that these stories are only stories, made up by ballad singers, and sung by minstrels, and children, and it's likely that "Robin Hood and his Merry Band" never even existed--

BLACK-OUT!!!! SCARY!

ALL: *(screaming in terror)* OH, NO!!! Bring us back!

TELLER: But, who cares?

LIGHTS BACK ON. *(the merry band are hiding behind their benches.*

Slowly they get back up.)

TELLER: The TRUTH is that Life is Hard.

ALL: YEAH!

TELLER: And life isn't fair!

ALL: No!

TELLER: Poor people always get poorer. They need to have a hero that they can tell stories about! Fun stories!

ALL: YEAH!

TELLER: Happy stories!

ALL: YEAH!

TELLER: They need hope.

ALL: YEAH!

TELLER: And right there, under the greenwood tree, under the trysting tree, in the comfort of summer, and the harsh cold of winter, Robin and his merry band told over and over again, their hopefulest story of all--

MAID MARION: Someday, our lives are going to be better, because King Richard is coming back!

ALL: YEAH!

MAID MARION: King Richard Lionheart!

ALL: YEAH!

MAID MARION: He's been away a long time at the Crusades, but now he's won all his battles, and he's coming back to kick out that nasty King John--

ALL: YEAH!

ROBIN HOOD: And the Sheriff of Nottingham, too.

ALL: YEAH!

ROBIN HOOD: King Richard Lionheart is coming back because he loves us and, he misses England so much. He loves England, and he wants to make our lives better. It'll be a great day for all of us when Richard comes home!

LITTLE JOHN: Well, I hope he comes soon.

GILBERT (*or other*): Yeah, I'm getting really tired of venison.

ALL agree.

WATCHER: Robin, Robin! I see someone coming! Oh, my God---

ALL: IT'S HIM! It's King Richard! He's come back!

Music, trumpets, drums----

EVERYONE watches spellbound as the long-awaited, long-hoped for King Richard gallantly, kingly, silently, powerfully approaches the clearing. He stands, looks around, takes it all in...

Everyone bows low on the ground. Prone on the ground!

KING RICHARD: *Speaks an unintelligible language. (in actuality he hated England and didn't speak a word of English. He only lived in England for a*

short time, and never really as an adult. He spoke a kind of Langedoquian dialect of French.) Gibberish.

ALL: What? What is he saying?

KING RICHARD: *Still gesturing and speaking gibberish!*

TINKER (POTS & PANS): Wait! I understand what he's saying! I know that language! It's from Kajamunya! I was a traveling tinker there for two years!

ALL: What's he saying?

KING RICHARD: *Gibberish--*

POTS & PANS: The King says . . . that he is glad to meet you.

KING RICHARD: *Gibberish--*

POTS & PANS: He has heard so much about this band of outlaws--

KING RICHARD: *Gibberish--*

POTS & PANS: ---that he wanted to see for himself what kind of men and women we are!

ALL CHEER.

ROBIN HOOD: We put ourselves and all our powers at your service, Sire.

POTS & PANS: *Gibberish--*

KING RICHARD: *Gibberish--*

POTS & PANS: He thanks you. The King thanks you.

ALL: Yayyy!

KING RICHARD: *Gibberish--*

ALL: What's he saying?

POTS & PANS: He says, now that he has seen for himself, he says, your outlaw days are over. He is home now. Go back to your homes, or come and fight for him, and when you come, bring him ALL of your money because he has lots of bills to pay, because the Great Crusades cost a lot of money, and the Royal Family had to pay for his Ransom! So that he could come home and be with us!

ALL: But--No way--What? No--Uh-uh---

KING RICHARD: *Gibberish. Long gibberish.*

SECRETARY: He says, Good-bye. *(the King prepares to depart)*

ROBIN HOOD: BUT, but---

KING RICHARD: *Gibberish.*

POTS & PANS: A pleasure to meet you, I am sure.

(trumpet, drums at king's departure)

MAID MARION: Men. Never put your faith in the wrong man.

ALL THE GIRLS IN THE CAST: Right.

SCENE THIRTEEN [Robin Hood dies. The immortal legend begins.]

TELLER: It is the year eleven hundred and ninety-eight! An uneasy peace lies over England.

MERRY MAN: Hey, you said that at the beginning--

TELLER: No, this is different. King Richard the first, Richard the Lionheart, comes back from the Crusades. His brother, Prince John, barely escapes to the Mainland. But Richard only stays a few days in England, then returns to France. He misses good French cooking. And wine.

The merry band breaks up, and one by one the men and women go back to farm and craft work. Maid Marion goes deeper into the forest and becomes a wise wise woman, making medicines for the suffering, feeding the hungry, and helping the poor people pay their rent. Little John stays and lives under the Trysting Tree, keeping the camp clean in case any of the merry band should return. Robin Hood--

ROBIN HOOD: I'll tell it, okay?

TELLER: I was just--

ROBIN HOOD: Let me tell my own story. Let the people hear my own words--

ALL: Let Robin tell it--

ROBIN HOOD: Well, some legends relate that I joined King Richard and fought beside him in France--what do you think?

ALL: Uh-uh.

ROBIN HOOD: And some people say that Maid Marion and I tied the knot, and lived happily ever after in the forest--

MAID MARION: Aw, that's just a fairy tale. I mean, I like you and all, but...

ROBIN HOOD: Well, the truth is I went to London, to court, to work for Eleanor of Aquitaine, the mother of King Richard and Prince John. I did the usual things--

(he shoots his bow, fights, clubs folks on the head, dances, fights some more, gets wounded, wounded again....)

--All I wanted to do was to keep on fighting, for the rest of my life, to take the extra money from the rich and distribute it to the poor, to help the peasants stay on their land, *(while he says this, he takes time to act it out--)*

ALL: Yeah!!! They dance and sing a Robin Hood ditty with him.

ROBIN HOOD: *(silencing them, stilling them)* But, if you do that for too long, you have enemies, everywhere, hiding behind every tree, and one day--

ALL: Robin, WATCH OUT!!

(he is clubbed from behind!) (no one can move) (Light change, music...)

(he crawls around the stage, unable to stand up. He fumbles for his weapons. He grows old and lame and halting before our eyes. He reaches for his bugle and weakly blows it.)

ALL: Robin!!

ROBIN HOOD: Little John, are you there? Maid Marion?

LITTLE JOHN, MARION: Yes, Robin--

ROBIN HOOD: Where am I?

LITTLE JOHN: You're under the Trysting Tree.

ROBIN HOOD: Ah. Stand me up--

LITTLE JOHN: Yes, Robin

ROBIN HOOD: My bow--

MAID MARION: It's in your hands--

ROBIN HOOD: An arrow---

LITTLE JOHN: Yes. *(he tenderly nocks it to Robin's trembling bow hand.)*

ROBIN HOOD: Wherever my arrow lands--

MAID MARION: Yes--

ROBIN HOOD: Go find the place, and let that be my place of memory, and let that be the place where the legend begins--the legend of--

ALL: ROBIN HOOD!

ROBIN HOOD: Help me. *(Marion helps him to draw back the bow-- They let it go together and the arrow lands in the audience's hearts.)(Twangwsshhh-thwack--boing--yes!!) music--light fade--freeze*

TELLER: Robin Hood was right. The legend landed in the hearts of men and women everywhere. Maybe Robin Hood existed, and maybe he didn't. But the legend is one of the very few that will live forever, as long as folks have to fight for a fair share of the wealth of this beautiful world, for the fruits of their labor in the earth, and to protect the earth, our world, from harm. The fight isn't over. It goes on today!

ALL: YAAAYYYYYY!!

(Lights up. The Merry Men and Women reach down and grab their sign, protest signs -- contents of which to be determined--and march around the stage.)

---Legends adapted for the stage by Peter Gould; downloadable script available at shakespearefreelibrary.com