



Robin Hood

by Stephen Duckham

2012

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 15 The Metro Centre
 Peterborough PE2 7UH
 Telephone: 01733 374790
 Fax: 01733 237286
 Email: info@noda.org.uk
www.noda.org.uk

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CHARACTERS

ROBIN HOOD	
MAID MARION	
AUNT EFFIE	Marion's Aunt
SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM	
FLOGGEM)	
WHIPPEM)	Sheriff's Henchmen
NELL NIGHTSHADE	An old Witch
WILL SCARLET	Medieval Camp Balladeer
LITTLE JOHN)	
FRIAR TUCK)	Robin's Men
ALAN A DALE)	
MUCH)	
TOBY)	
KING RICHARD THE FIRST	

CHORUS

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

SCENE 1	NOTTINGHAM TOWN
SCENE 2	BEHIND THE CASTLE
SCENE 3	THE BAQUETING HALL
SCENE 4	BEHIND THE CASTLE
SCENE 5	THE DUNGEONS
SCENE 6	BEHIND THE CASTLE
SCENE 7	SHERWOOD FOREST

ACT TWO

SCENE 1	NOTTINGHAM TOWN
SCENE 2	ON THE WAY TO SHERWOOD
SCENE 3	A HAY CART*
SCENE 4	SHERWOOD FOREST
SCENE 5	ON THE WAY HOME
SCENE 6	THE GREAT HALL AT LOCKSLEY CASTLE

*Alternative SCENE 3 A BARN
(See notes at the end of the script)

PRODUCTION NOTES

SCENERY

ACT ONE

SCENE 1 NOTTINGHAM TOWN

A full stage set with medieval buildings R & L including a pub and a house with a practical door. The backcloth shows other parts of town with Nottingham Castle in the distance.

SCENES 2,4 and 6 BEHIND THE CASTLE

Front cloth depicting the walls of the castle and countryside in the distance.

SCENE 3 THE BANQUETING HALL

A half stage cloth depicting a lavish hall in the castle. A large long table with a trick revolving top is centre with chairs at either end and one up stage

SCENE 5 THE DUNGEONS

A three quarter set depicting a dingy dungeon scene with a wall piece to one side that can revolve. This is where Will is chained up. On the other side of the stage is a wall that can be broken through. If it is difficult to manage the revolving wall another way to effect the scene with Will disappearing is to have a cloth or canvas piece with a slit in the middle and painted to look like a wall. Will can then 'fall' through the wall when the scone is pulled and re-appear the same way. Also, the breaking down of the other wall can be done off stage with a few 'stone' blocks being thrown on stage before Robin and the Men enter.

SCENE 7 SHERWOOD FOREST

A full set showing Robin's hide-out deep in the forest. Trees on either side and a fire with a cooking pot hanging over it.

ACT TWO

SCENE 1 NOTTINGHAM GOOSE FAIR

Same as Act 1 Scene 1 with bunting and stalls added for the fair.

SCENE 2&5 ON THE WAY TO SHERWOOD /ON THE WAY HOME

Front cloth. Also required in the scene are a log or rustic bench, a bush large enough to hide behind in a crouched position and a sign post that can be swivelled. These are only needed in Scene 2.

SCENE 3 A cut out of the back of a hay wagon with a screen up stage of it. (Please see end of the script for an alternative scene.)

SCENE 4 SHERWOOD FOREST Repeat Act 1 Scene 7

SCENE 6 THE GREAT HALL AT LOCKSLEY CASTLE

Walk down. This scene can be as impressive as possible with heraldic banners showing various 'Coat of Arms' etc.

CHARACTERS

Robin can be played by either a man or woman, but must always have that strong determined character. The Sheriff is the villain of the piece who always leaves himself open to ridicule. Floggem and Whippem are the knockabout comedy characters who, although at first in the employ of the Sheriff, should always have the audience on their side. Whippem usually has the upper hand with Floggem getting most of the knocks! Marian in a spirited Principal Girl – please don't play her too demure or wet. Nell Nightshade is an old crone – warts and all! She has a cackle-like laugh and dreadful halitosis. Will Scarlet starts off as a balladeer before becoming one of Robin's men. He is rather fey with a cheeky side, but not an over the top camp character. And finally Aunt Effie, the comical Dame and should always be played by a man. A large character in every sense of the word and always played for laughs.

The company can be as large as you like with as much individuality as possible. Robin's Band of Men can be part of the Male Chorus.

The placing of musical numbers and who sings them is suggested in the script, but it is up to the director to decide what to use. A word of advice: Pantomime audiences – particularly the younger members – like the story to keep moving, so don't make the musical sequences too long, especially ballads.

I hope you enjoy doing this version of 'Robin Hood' and have a great success with your production.

Stephen Duckham

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I was asked to write this version of *Robin Hood* as an alternative to my earlier pantomime, *Babes in the Wood*. Both scripts have a number of similarities in the dialogue and characters and give a company the option of using junior actors for the *Babes* or telling the story with an all adult cast. In both scripts the use of a junior chorus is optional.

There is an original song for the Sheriff and Nell in Act Two which can be used if required. Please see the end of the script for information.

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ACT ONESCENE 1 NOTTINGHAM TOWN

[An Inn is to one side of the stage and a house to the other. The back cloth depicts a Nottingham medieval street with the castle in the distance. The scene opens in darkness. After the musical introduction a light appears down right and into it walks WILL SCARLET, a rather fey medieval balladeer. He is strumming a lute and singing.]

WILL

Hey ho in a voice that's mellow,
This is the story of a very brave fellow!
[He speaks.]

Hello. I'm Will Scarlet and this is England 1190. The time of King Richard the First – Richard the Lion Heart. At this moment he is away in the Holy Land fighting a lot of rough men at the Crusades. His beloved country has been left under the rule of his brother, Prince John. And what a nasty piece of work he is! Instead of looking after the interests of his subjects, John has increased the taxes and driven people into poverty. (Sound familiar?) A number of the nobility have joined in allegiance with Prince John, including the corrupt Sheriff of Nottingham.

[A light comes up on the SHERIFF down left.]

Anyone who does not pay homage to the prince – or pay his taxes – is declared an outlaw with a price on his head.

[The SHERIFF produces a dagger and laughs.] Oh boo, hiss! *[To the audience.]* You can do the same if you like. *[Audience boo and the SHERIFF makes a face as the light fades on him.]* Very good! You're my type of people! But one man alone is determined to right the wrongs perpetrated by the ruling classes. A big, brave, handsome fellow by the name of Robin Hood.

[A light comes up on ROBIN HOOD centre stage. HE slaps a thigh.]

Nice costume. Very retro! So this is his tale. And I know it very well and sing about it all over the country. I'm a sort of medieval Robbie Williams! *[Or a topical famous pop singer. The audience should react to this.]* Well please yourselves! Anyway my story starts in the town of Nottingham where Robin and his band of Merry Men are looking after *all* the needs of the townsfolk. *[Reaction from audience.]* Oh behave yourselves!

[WILL exits. Lights come up on main scene. CHORUS enter and greet ROBIN. THEY join him in the opening number.]

OPENING NUMBER

[The song ends and MUCH crosses to ROBIN.]

MUCH

Robin, the Sheriff's men are coming. Be careful you don't get caught.

ROBIN

No fear of that! *[To the GIRLS in the CHORUS.]* Ladies, may I borrow a few things from you?

GIRLS

Of course Robin. *[THEY give him a cloak, and old hat and a basket of vegetables so HE has the disguise of an old woman. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEN are heard off.]*

F & W Make way, make way.

[THEY enter and cross through the crowd, ending C. WHIPPEM gives the impression of being the boss. FLOGGEM is continuously saying and doing the wrong thing which usually ends up with him being hit.]

FLOGGEM Clear a way there.

WHIPPEM Come on you lot, shift!

FLOGGEM Messers. Floggem and Whippem here.

WHIPPEM He's Floggem.....

FLOGGEM and he's Whippet!

WHIPPEM Whippem!

FLOGGEM And we are the Sheriff's henchmen.

WHIPPEM I'm his right hand man.

FLOGGEM And I'm his left one!

WHIPPEM No, no. You're a right one.

L/JOHN You can say that again! *[ALL laugh.]*

WHIPPEM All right, all right. That's enough from you peasants. *[HE starts to make an announcement.]* Hear ye all. Draw near and give full attention for here comes his most malicious mountainship –

FLOGGEM His awesome awfulness –

WHIPPEM His noble nastiness –

FLOGGEM His deep down, dirty double-crossing, disgusting, dastardly.....*[WHIPPEM hits him and he falls. ALL laugh.]*

WHIPPEM Get up! *[FLOGGEM stands and they announce:]*

BOTH His warship, Sir Silas Skinflint, the Sheriff of Nottingham.

[ALL boo as the SHERIFF enters.]

SHERIFF Greetings you pathetic populace. I'm sure you all know why I'm here and what today is. *[ALL moan.]* Yes that's right; you've got it in one. Its tax-collecting time!

MUCH But you've taken taxes twice this year. You're nearly as bad as – *[Name of Chancellor of the Exchequer.]*

SHERIFF True – but I'm much better looking! *[HE licks a finger and brushes his eyebrows.]*

WOMAN It's just not fair.

SHERIFF I know, I know. But life isn't fair, is it? You see with our dear King Richard away at the Crusades his brother, Prince John, has to keep the country going. And what with the cost of living, inflation, the upkeep of two or three castles, the chateau in the South of France *[COMPANY react to this.]* er I mean – times *is* hard, dear people times *is* hard!

ALAN Yes, and they'll be even harder for us.

F/TUCK But my lord Sheriff these families are all very poor with hungry mouths to feed.

SHERIFF Well in that case, my good Friar, perhaps you should ask for a little divine intervention!

F/TUCK I hardly think.....

[ALL moan.]

SHERIFF Oh do stop all this whinging and empty your pockets. *[Boos from the CHORUS. They encourage the audience to boo, also. The SHERIFF comes to the edge of the stage and addresses the audience.]* And you can shut up as well, or I'll double the tax on a new – *[HE names the latest children's electronic game. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM push the CROWD back.]* But to show I'm not the heartless meany you all think I am, I've devised a little sporting entertainment for you all. Men, read the announcement.

WHIPPEM Oh yez, oh yez.

FLOGGEM Oh no! Oh no!

WHIPPEM What's the matter?

FLOGGEM I've lost the scroll!

WHIPPEM Oh you idiot. You must have dropped it. *[THEY run around looking for the scroll, which is tucked into the back of FLOGGEMS breeches.]*

ALL It's behind you!

WHIPPEM Oh come on, we're not falling for that old gag!

SHERIFF You pair of bungling buffoons! *[HE pulls out the scroll.]*

FLOGGEM Ooooh! That really hurt! *[The SHERIFF hits him and he falls. SHERIFF gives the scroll to WHIPPEM. ROBIN moves down in the crowd.]*

SHERIFF Here, read it out.

WHIPPEM Oh yez, oh yez. In keeping with your noble Sheriff's kind and considerate nature – *[CROWD reacts.]* – he will be holding a grand archery contest to celebrate the Nottingham Goose fair this Saturday. The winner of the contest will receive a prize of 100 crowns. *[Big reaction.]*

ROBIN *[Dressed as an old woman.]* And where's the prize money coming from? Our taxes?

SHERIFF What are you talking about, old woman?

ROBIN You'll just take the money you collect and give it back to us as the prize!

[ALL react in agreement.]

SHERIFF Listen you lot, it's not me who takes other people's money. That honour goes that unscrupulous outlaw Robin Hood. He has perpetrated a reign of terror in this district. It's not safe to be out after dark. The men of Nottingham are forced to sleep with their battle-axes by their sides.

FLOGGEM Well it's their own fault. They shouldn't have married them!

[WHIPPEM hits him.]

SHERIFF And just remember there is a price on his head, so anyone found consorting with him will hang from the gibbet next to him when he is caught!

ROBIN You'll never catch Robin Hood. He's always one step ahead of you.

SHERIFF He may be a master of disguise, but he won't be able to get one over me. I can spot him a mile off. And when I do this is what will happen..... *[HE mimes a noose around his neck, his head to one side and tongue hanging out.]* Ha ha ha! *[HE turns to leave and bumps into FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM.]* Come on you nauseating numbskulls! *[SHERIFF, FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM exit.]*

ROBIN *[Taking off disguise.]* I think the Sheriff needs to visit Specsavers if he thinks he can spot me a mile off. *[ALL laugh.]*

WOMAN So where have you been these past few days.

ROBIN *[To FRIAR TUCK.]* Shall we tell her Tuck?

F/TUCK Why not my son?

ROBIN Well our good friend Friar Tuck heard a rumour that the Bishop of Nottingham has been making collections after the Sunday service that somehow end up in his vaults instead of being distributed amongst the poor. So when he made his annual visit to London yesterday, laden down with moneybags, my gallant band of men and I decided to lighten his load! *[HE takes out money bags from pouch on his belt and throws them to the CROWD.]* Here my friends. Now you've no need to worry about buying food or paying taxes!

3rd WOMAN Oh Robin, how can we ever repay you?

ROBIN No need.

L/JOHN Now Robin, I really think it's time you were heading back to Sherwood.

ROBIN All in good time John. I was hoping to see the fair Maid Marion. *[MARION enters up stage unseen by ROBIN. SHE "Shh's" the CROWD.]* I don't suppose any of you have seen her today?

ALAN And what would such a high born lady be doing with the likes of you?

ROBIN Well, Alan, she has shown some interest.....

F/TUCK But she is the Sheriff's ward my son and you know what would happen if he found her walking and talking to an 'outlaw'.

ROBIN Outlaw indeed! Why, everyone knows he stole my lands and title after my father was killed fighting alongside King Richard in the Holy Land.

ALAN That's all very well, but how does Marion feel about you?

MUCH Does she think you are brave?

ROBIN Yes.

L/JOHN And bold?

ROBIN Yes.

F/TUCK And fearless?

ROBIN Yes.

WOMAN And trustworthy?

ROBIN Yes.

TOBY And handsome?

ROBIN Yes.

MARION And just a little bit conceited?

ROBIN Yes! No! *[HE turns and sees MARION.]* Marion! *[ALL laugh.]* How long have you been there?

MARION Long enough my brave, fearless, handsome outlaw.

ROBIN Oh Marion, it is good to see you.

MARION But Robin, you shouldn't come into town in broad daylight, you know how dangerous it is.

ROBIN How can I stay away if it means not seeing you?

MARION And how did you know I would be here at this precise moment?

ROBIN One of the good people of Nottingham may have mentioned it!

MARION Oh really?

ROBIN My trusted friends are always looking out for me.

L/JOHN Of course we are, Robin.

MEN You can always count on us. Etc.

ROBIN I've also been hatching a plan not only to get the taxes back for these good people, but also to win that archery contest on Saturday.

MARION But Robin, I heard the Sheriff telling his henchmen that he has rigged the match so that he will win.

ROBIN Has he indeed? Well, I'll just have to make sure his plans come to nought. With your help my friends – and yours Marion, we will put an end to all this tyranny and injustice. *[ALL cheer.]*

SONG – ROBIN, MARION & CHORUS

[At the end of the number ALL exit. There is a shriek of laughter from the Inn and a voice is heard off.]

EFFIE Oooh you are a terrible man! You shouldn't make promises you can't keep! *[The door of the Inn opens and AUNT EFFIE the Dame is standing with her back to the audience.]* I bet your wife doesn't know what you're up to!

[SHE turns and sees the audience.] Oh hello. Have you come here specially to welcome me to Nottingham? Oh how nice. Well let me introduce myself. I'm Mistress Euphemia Ermengarde Ernestina Egglestone. But that's a bit of a mouthful so I'm known to my friends as Aunt Effie. And as you have turned out to greet me so nicely I'm going to make you all my special friends. Would you like that? *[Reaction.]* Well don't get too excited! I said would you like that? *[Reaction.]* That's better. And as special friends when I see you I'll shout out "How are you" and you shout back "Hever so well, HEffie". Will you do that? OK let's have a go. *[Business with audience.]* That's wonderful. Now I suppose you're wondering what I'm doing here. Well listen up 'cause this is the plot! I've travelled all the way from Lincoln to visit my only niece Marion Fitzwalter. I have some very exciting news for her. I've been looking for her everywhere. Up one street and down another. It's quite worn me out. Then I met this kind farmer who took me in there – *[Points to Inn.]* – for a sit down. He said I needed a tonic to fortify my follicles and bolsterer my bu.....*[SHE goes to adjust her bust then starts some exercises.]*er, constitution! I get palpitations you know! In fact I think I'm getting one now so I better have another tonic. *[SHE takes a bottle out of her cleavage, knocks the top of and downs it in one. Sound effect of "glugging" noise. SHE then staggers L & R and finally back C. A sound effect accompanies this.]* Oh that's better. And the journey from Lincoln was terrible. I decided to do my bit for the environment and reduce my carbon footprint. So instead of travelling by coach I travelled by ass. That was a big mistake. I saw lots of people in coaches and they looked very comfortable – well it wasn't comfortable on my a....*[SHE claps her hand to her mouth.]* Anyway, from now on I'm going to travel on foot! A bit of exercise will do me good and help me retain my youthful figure! *[SHE moves around the stage showing off her figure which should start some reaction from the audience.]* What?? We girls have to keep ourselves looking our best, don't we? You never know when the man of your dreams is going to pop into your life. *[SHE starts to exit as the SHERIFF*

enters and they bump into each other.] Oh girls look – it's – [SHE says the name of a current pop or film star.]

SHERIFF Out of my way, you old hag!

EFFIE *[Fluttering her eyes at him.]* Oh you do have a way with words!

SHERIFF Remove yourself from my presence, you fossilised old relic!

EFFIE Here, who are you calling old?

SHERIFF Do you know who I am?

EFFIE No, but if you have a lie down I'm sure you'll remember.

SHERIFF Who *are* you?

EFFIE I am Mistress Euphemia Ermengarde Ernestina Egglestone, BBC, ITV, TSB, AA and RAC! And spinster of this parish! But you can call me Effie!

SHERIFF Well I am Sir Silas Skinflint, the Sheriff of Nottingham.

EFFIE The Sheriff? Well what a co-in-ci-dence! I've been looking for you.

SHERIFF *[Suspiciously.]* You have? Why?

EFFIE Are you or are you not protector to my niece Marion Fitzwalter?

SHERIFF That is correct. Her late father had the estate next to mine and asked me to look after her until she marries. She has stayed with me at the castle since he passed away.

EFFIE Well I have some news for her that I'm sure will be welcomed.

SHERIFF And what is that?

EFFIE All her father's affairs have now been settled and she is to inherit everything.

SHERIFF *[Wide-eyed.]* Really? *[Casually.]* And er... about how much is his estate worth?

EFFIE Well if you add up the house and surrounding lands, the tenant farmers, the wine producing vineyard, his personal fortune and his ICA with the - *[Local name]* - Building Society, I would say around twenty five thousand groats!

SHERIFF *[Reeling.]* Twenty five thou.....

EFFIE *[Finishing his line.]* Groats! Yes. Whoever Marion marries is going to be a very lucky man - on all accounts!

SHERIFF *[Aside.]* Ooooh, just think, all that money. I must find a way of getting my hands on that. I better keep in this old hag's good books! *[HE feigns sadness.]* Oh dear old Bertram, he was a good friend and neighbour. I shall miss him so.

EFFIE There, there dear. Don't upset yourself. Just come to Effie. She'll comfort you. *[SHE grabs his head and pushes it into her ample bosom.]* I know how it is, but just remember you've got me to turn to whenever you're feeling down. *[HE comes up for air and SHE pulls him back.]* After all, if I can't give succour to someone like you at a time like this, who can?

SHERIFF *[Pulling away.]* Madam please! I need assistance, not asphyxiation!

EFFIE Oh I'm sorry, I was forgetting myself. Please forgive me your majesticals, but it has been so long since I've had a big, strong man to look after!

DUET – EFFIE & SHERIFF

[At the end of the number -]

EFFIE Now I must find Marion and tell her the good news.

SHERIFF Why don't you save it until later? I'll hold a banquet tonight in your honour and you can announce it then as a big surprise.

EFFIE Oooh, a banquet in my honour? The most a man ever did for me was a Kentucky Fried Chicken and a can of Red Bull! I'll see you later.

[EFFIE exits blowing a kiss to the SHERIFF. HE shudders then looks around. Seeing HE is alone HE calls.]

SHERIFF Nell. Nell Nightshade where are you? I know you're around here somewhere. You're always lurking in the shadows.

NELL *[Off.]* Not lurking. Never lurking!

SHERIFF Come here. I want to talk to you.

[NELL enters. SHE is a cross between a witch and an old crone. Slightly wild in appearance and able to make mischief at any time. Around her neck she wears a necklace of bones which she often rubs her fingers over. It is a source of her power.]

NELL Hello, my dear. What do you want with old Nell? Something underhand no doubt. *[Fingering the necklace of bones.]* Or so the bones of my ancestors tell me. *[SHE laughs in his face and obviously has a problem with halitosis as the SHERIFF grimaces and covers his mouth and nose.]*

SHERIFF Ooh, your breath could strip paint. *[Pointing to the bone necklace.]* You still wear that disgusting old thing round your neck?

NELL It's the source of my power. Without it I wouldn't be able to help you with your nefarious deeds.

SHERIFF Hush. *[HE looks around to make sure no one is listening.]* I've just heard that my ward, Marion, has inherited her father's estate worth a lot of money.

NELL And you want to get your hands on it.

SHERIFF How did you guess?

- NELL I know you too well. How did you learn this interesting piece of news?
- SHERIFF From Marion's aunt. I've persuaded her to keep it as a surprise at a banquet tonight. That will give me time to figure out what to do.
- NELL They didn't call you slippery Silas for nothing at school. *[SHE laughs again in his face.]*
- SHERIFF Ooooh! *[HE turns away, wafting the air with his hand.]* I need to make Marion see that I would be a good catch for a husband. Then after we're married perhaps an accident and then the fortune will be mine!
- NELL *[Fingering HER necklace.]* I'm sure I could come up with something – for the usual fee, of course.
- SHERIFF Of course. But just remember that I granted you your freedom after the death of old Locksley.
- NELL Yes. That old goody-goody banished me for witchcraft. But I soon showed him. I put a curse on him and his family. Now he's dead fighting alongside that other goody-goody King Richard, I'm waiting to get revenge on his son. *[SHE gets excited at the prospect of revenge on ROBIN.]*
- SHERIFF Robin Hood! Another thorn in my side. But first things first. Once I have the inheritance then we can turn out attention to that audacious outlaw.
- NELL Very well, Silas.
- SHERIFF It's 'My Lord Sheriff' when we're in public.
- NELL Anything you say my dear.
- SHERIFF Meet me behind the castle in two hours. And make sure no one sees you. *[HE looks one way and SHE looks another. THEY then turn to look at each other. NELL cackles in his face. HE reels.]* Have you never heard of Listerine?
- NELL Are they a new pop group? *[SHE laughs again and HE exits quickly.]* So another dastardly deed the Sheriff wants doing. Right up my street! Since he became Sheriff I've made sure Silas finds my assistance invaluable. And in time we'll both put an end to Robin Hood and become the most powerful people in these parts. *[SHE cackles with laughter and exits left. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM enter with a trick tax collecting box.]*
- WHIPPEM Now we've got to collect the taxes for the Sheriff. Go and knock on that door over there.
- FLOGGEM Right. *[HE knocks on a door and crosses back to WHIPPEM.]*
- WHIPPEM What are you doing?
- FLOGGEM I knocked on the door like you said.
- WHIPPEM But you're supposed to collect the tax. Now do it properly. *[FLOGGEM crosses to the door, knocks and a WOMAN opens it.]*

WOMAN Yes?

FLOGGEM I've come for the tax.

WOMAN Here you are. *[SHE hands him a box of tacks.]*

FLOGGEM Thank you very much. *[WOMAN shuts the door. FLOGGEM crosses back to WHIPPEM.]* That was easy.

WHIPPEM What have you got there?

FLOGGEM The tax!

WHIPPEM Oooh! You're the next thing to an idiot!

FLOGGEM In that case I'll move! *[HE takes a step away. WHIPPEM hits him and he falls.]*

WHIPPEM How did I end up with you as a partner?

FLOGGEM *[Getting up.]* I answered the ad in the newspaper!

WHIPPEM I'll show you how it's done. *[HE goes around the stage banging on doors and calling.]* Come on you lot, it's tax collecting time. *[Groans all round as TOWNSPEOPLE enter.]* Anyone who does not pay up will spend a delightful few weeks as a guest of the Sheriff in the master dungeon with rack and ensuite thumbscrew facilities! Come on, come on. Line up there and hand over your dosh! *[During the following, ROBIN enters wearing a cloak. HE crawls under the tax box and makes a hole in the bottom with his knife.]*

MUCH This is an outrage.

F/TUCK These good people are all going to starve to death. *[General moans.]*

WHIPPEM *[To TOBY.]* Come on, pay up.

TOBY This is my life savings. *[HE gives a bag of money to WHIPPEM who throws it to FLOGGEM. FLOGGEM puts it in the box and it falls out of the bottom. ROBIN passes it to one of the CROWD and it gets passed back to TOBY. This is repeated with each bag.]*

WHIPPEM Next.

L/JOHN It's all I'd put by for a rainy day.

WHIPPEM Well look at it this way – with global warming you won't be needing it! *[Grabs money.]* Next. *[More groans as the taxes are collected.]* Come on, come on. Cough up! *[After the final bag has been collected and returned.]* And that's the lot. *[HE crosses back to FLOGGEM who slams the lid down.]* Now that wasn't too painful, was it?

[The SHERIFF enters.]

SHERIFF Has all the money been collected?

FLOGGEM Yes, your *warship*.

WHIPPEM All present and accounted for, your battleship!

SHERIFF Excellent. Now I'll be able to get the new *[Latest pop group album title.]* er, I mean Prince John will be eternally grateful for your contribution to the treasury.

FLOGGEM Not to mention the manager of – *[Name of local bank.]*

SHERIFF Now let me see how much there is. *[HE opens the box and peers in smiling.]* Just look at that. It's empty. *[HE does a double take.]* EMPTY!! Ahgg! Where's all the money?

[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM look inside the box.]

WHIPPEM But it was there.

FLOGGEM We collected it ourselves.

F/TUCK They did indeed my lord. I witnessed it myself.

SHERIFF Collected it *for* yourselves you mean. Did you put it in the box or in your own pockets? *[HE searches them.]*

FLOGGEM Oh don't. You're tickling me! *[HE giggles.]*

WHIPPEM But your honour, we did collect it. From everyone.

SHERIFF Then there is only one explanation. I've been robbed! And there is only one person audacious enough to do such a thing in broad daylight. The outlaw Robin Hood. He must be around here somewhere. *[HE draws his sword.]* Search everywhere until he is found.

ROBIN *[Still with his disguise on.]* I think I saw someone running down that street.

SHERIFF Quick men, after him. He must not escape this time. *[ALL THREE run for the exit and get trapped. The SHERIFF pulls FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM back and runs off. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM fall over each other then run off. ALL laugh.]*

ROBIN *[Taking off his disguise.]* Well, the Sheriff seems to have a few more problems to keep him busy.

L/JOHN All thanks to you, Robin. *[ALL agree.]*

COMPANY NUMBER

[This can be a new number or part Reprise of the opening song. At the end of the number the lights fade and the scene changes to.....]

SCENE 2 BEHIND THE CASTLE

[A front cloth depicting the walls of the castle. NELL enters left.]

NELL I've consulted my spirits. Checked the alignment of the stars and called on all the mystic powers and black arts – *[SHE rubs her fingers over the necklace.]* – of my ancestors to help me. And I've got it! I know how to help Silas achieve his aims. Oh I'm good. I should be writing the horoscopes for – *[SHE names the local paper then throws HER head back and cackles just as the SHERIFF enters. HE gets another blast of HER bad breath.]*

SHERIFF Oooh! It's like living next to the sewage works! *[HE moves away.]* Well? What have you come up with?

NELL A plan. A wonderful plan.

SHERIFF What is it?

NELL You'll never guess. Never in a million years.

SHERIFF I don't want to guess. I want you to tell me.

NELL *[Giggling.]* It's brilliant.

SHERIFF *[Shouting.]* Tell me!!!

NELL *[Finger to mouth.]* Shhhh! You don't want everyone to hear.

SHERIFF *[Whispering.]* What's the plan?

NELL *[SHE takes out a small bottle.]* Add some of this to the aunt's drink at the banquet tonight. It will knock her out before she has time to relate the news. Get her taken to the old dungeon. Then you have your chance with Marion.

SHERIFF But what happens if she turns me down?

NELL Tell her that her father has left her penniless. She's bound to want to continue living in the style she is accustomed to.

SHERIFF And if she still refuses?

NELL *[Taking out another bottle.]* This is a potion to awaken the romantic feelings in someone.

SHERIFF I think you had better be there to administer the content of these bottles.

NELL Oh with pleasure. It's been a long time since I was invited to a banquet.

SHERIFF Not as a guest, you imbecile. You can be a serving wench.

NELL That will cost you extra for my services.

SHERIFF *[Irritated.]* Very well. *[An afterthought.]* But you have forgotten one thing. What happens when the aunt comes round in the morning and tells her the truth?

NELL She won't be able to.

SHERIFF Why not?

NELL Because I shall conjure up my ghostly ancestors who haunt the dungeons and scare the woman to death. *[SHE lets out a great cackle of laughter. The SHERIFF "shushes" her.]*

SHERIFF Will it work?

NELL Of course. Have I ever failed you?

SHERIFF *[Pulling back. Mulling over the idea.]* That's not bad. Not bad at all. *[HE begins to smile to himself.]* Will there be ghosties?

NELL *[With relish.]* Gargantuan ghosties.

SHERIFF Will there be ghoulies?

NELL *[Very straight.]* No dear!

SHERIFF I must say this is one of your more inventive ideas!

NELL I'll go and wake up the spirits and ghosts who have been lingering in limbo for centuries. They can have a spectres ball tonight and scare the life out of the poor old woman! *[HE starts to laugh and so does SHE. HE gets it in the face again as SHE exits.]*

SHERIFF I really must get the blacksmith to extract those mouldy teeth of hers. *[HE laughs evilly and exits. From the other side of the stage FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM enter out of breath.]*

WHIPPEM Oh it's no good. You've let Robin Hood escape again.

FLOGGEM What do you mean "I let him escape"? You were chasing him too.

WHIPPEM Yes but if you hadn't stopped to buy that lottery ticket we'd have caught him.

FLOGGEM Well I didn't want to miss out on a chance of winning. It's a double rollover. Then I could tell the Sheriff what to do with his rotten job.

WHIPPEM I suppose you've got a point. But if you did win millions, what would you do about the begging letters?

FLOGGEM I'd keep sending them.

WHIPPEM If you don't like your job why don't you get another one?

FLOGGEM Oh I had a different job once. I was a gravedigger.

WHIPPEM Really?

FLOGGEM Yes, but it was a bit of a dead end job!

WHIPPEM Ooooh!

- FLOGGEM 'ere, I thought of applying for a job I saw advertised in the *[Name of local newspaper.]* It was for *[Name of local butcher.]*
- WHIPPEM Oh?
- FLOGGEM Yes, they wanted a 'chop' assistant! *[HE falls about laughing as the SHERIFF enters.]* A 'chop' assistant! *[Still laughing, HE clings to the SHERIFF who just stands there. Bit by bit FLOGGEM realises, stops laughing and moves away.]*
- SHERIFF So this is what you do all day long is it? No wonder that blackguard Robin Hood can roam around free, robbing me of every last gold piece while you two sit around doing nothing.
- WHIPPEM Oh we don't always sit around.
- FLOGGEM Sometimes we lie down! *[WHIPPEM hits him.]*
- SHERIFF Silence! You puny pair of pipsqueaks! *[HE has been spitting the words out at them. THEY wipe their faces.]*
- WHIPPEM Well, that saves us washing again this week.
- SHERIFF Now listen. I have a job for you. I'm giving a banquet tonight and I want you to be in attendance.
- WHIPPEM Oh you shouldn't – really!
- SHERIFF *[Through gritted teeth.]* Not for you – fool! At some point during the evening Marion's aunt will become unwell and I want you to take her to the old dungeon to recover.
- WHIPPEM The old dungeon? But isn't it supposed to be –
- BOTH *[Big swallow.]* – haunted?
- SHERIFF Precisely!
- FLOGGEM What if we get scared to death?
- SHERIFF Oh don't be ridiculous. Two big strapping lads like you can't be afraid of a superstitious tale
- FLOGGEM Do you wanna bet?
- SHERIFF Oh tosh.
- WHIPPEM Well in that case why don't *you* go down there?
- SHERIFF *[Scared.]* Me? Are you mad? *[With authority.]* Er, I mean I've got more important things to do around the castle. Affairs of state you know.
- FLOGGEM You don't think you're the teensiest, weensiest bit scared that a ghost might pop out?

SHERIFF Of course not.

WHIPPEM No, of course not. You're the Sheriff and nothing could possibly frighten you.

SHERIFF Quite right. *[EFFIE enters behind the SHERIFF.]*

EFFIE Hello there!

SHERIFF *[Scared.]* Ahhh! *[HE falls into the arms of FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM.]*

EFFIE You see – I always have the same effect on men. *[To the audience.]* How are you? *[They respond.]*

SHERIFF *[Standing.]* Ah dear lady. I didn't see you there.

WHIPPEM You can't really miss her in that outfit!

EFFIE You ought to try carrots. They're good for the eyes.

FLOGGEM I tried carrots once, but they didn't work.

EFFIE Oh?

FLOGGEM No. I nearly poked my eye out!

WHIPPEM Oh do shut up!

SHERIFF Right now you two, you have your orders. Get to it.

FLOGGEM Right boss. *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM exit.]*

SHERIFF And I must be going too.

EFFIE Oh really. I thought you could take me on a conducted tour of the town.

SHERIFF I can't think of anything more entertaining – but I will eventually! Anyway I have a lot of arrangements to make for the banquet.

EFFIE Ohh, the banquet – yes. I'll wear my sexiest gown. It's called 'The cowhand'.

SHERIFF Why 'The cowhand'.

EFFIE *[Demonstrating.]* Because it rounds 'em up and moves 'em out!
[The SHERIFF exits quickly.]
Oh he is a fine figure of a man. But I think there's something a bit shady about him, don't you boys and girls? *[Reaction.]* I'll have to keep my eye on him!
[ROBIN and MARION enter.]

MARION Auntie?

EFFIE *[Turning. Delighted at seeing her niece.]* Marion. There you are. *[They embrace.]* I've been looking all over Nottingham for you.

MARION You didn't tell me you were coming to visit.

EFFIE I wanted to surprise my favourite niece. *[Sees ROBIN.]* What are you doing with this strange man?

MARION There's nothing strange about Robin.

EFFIE You're not standing where I'm standing.

MARION This is Robin Hood.

EFFIE Oh really? Pleased to meet.....Robin Hood? The outlaw? Oh we'll all be murdered in our beds! Help! Police! *[SHE runs around the stage shouting.]* Call out the army! Send for the Marines!

MARION Auntie, there's nothing to worry about. Robin wouldn't harm anyone. He's a good and kind friend to everyone in Nottingham

EFFIE *[Coming round.]* Oh well, if you're sure. *[SHE curtseys.]* Pleased to meet you.

ROBIN *[With a bow and kisses her hand.]* The pleasure is mine dear lady. *[EFFIE looks up and swoons.]*

EFFIE Oh, I've come over all unnecessary. I think I need another tonic! *[SHE takes out a bottle from her cleavage and downs it.]*

MARION What brings you here?

EFFIE *[Glancing at ROBIN.]* It's a private family matter.....

MARION Robin and I have no secrets, Auntie.

EFFIE Well it doesn't matter now anyway as I'm going to surprise you at the banquet tonight.

MARION Banquet?

EFFIE Yes. That sexy old Sheriff is throwing one at me – I mean for me – as a welcome to Nottingham.

ROBIN That's very generous of him. If he's spending money like that he must be after something.

EFFIE Well I can tell you young man – if he plays his cards right he might get it!

MARION Auntie, you mustn't trust the Sheriff. He's done some terrible things to people.

EFFIE What man hasn't? Anyway I'd better get myself ready for this banquet. It should be quite a night.

ROBIN *[To EFFIE.]* Until later. *[EFFIE holds her hand out seductively. ROBIN shakes it.]*

EFFIE *[To the audience.]* Oh, he could twang my bow anytime! *[SHE exits.]*

ROBIN Marion I should be getting back.

MARION Oh Robin, I hate these few stolen moments we have together.

ROBIN Don't worry. One day things will be different. I promise you.

DUET – ROBIN AND MARION

[At the end of the number the lights fade and the scene changes to]

SCENE 3 THE BANQUETING HALL

[A long table dominates the scene. This needs to have part of the table top on a pivot with a banquet laid out and secured down. Other practical items are brought during the scene. The SHERIFF enters.]

SHERIFF Is everything ready? *[Seeing the empty table.]* Where is everyone? What's going on? *[HE goes behind it and suddenly NELL pops up.]*

NELL Hello dear.

SHERIFF Why isn't the table prepared?

NELL Don't fret dear. I've got everything under control. Just stand back and watch. *[The SHERIFF moves to one side as NELL starts to recite while fingering the bone necklace.]*
Ancestors awake from your sleep this night
And create an astronomical delight.

[Lighting effect as the table top pivots over to reveal one full of food.] There you are. A banquet fit for a king. *[SHE laughs exhaling over the food.]*

SHERIFF Don't breath on it. You'll give us all food poisoning! And where are those two numskulls who should be in attendance?

NELL They've gone to escort your guests of honour.

SHERIFF Nothing must go wrong tonight. You have the potions?

NELL *[Tapping a pocket in her skirt.]* Safe and sound. And to add to the evening I've arranged some music from a local balladeer. *[SHE calls off.]* Over here.

[WILL enters and bows.]

WILL It is an honour to play for you Lordship.

SHERIFF Make sure it's soft and romantic. None of this modern rubbish like - *[Name of current pop group.]*

WILL Whatever you Lordship commands. *[HE waits at the far end of the table.]*

FANFARE

[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM rush on to announce the arrival of the guests.]

FLOGGEM The honourable Mistress Euphemia Ermengarde Ernestina Egglestone.

WHIPPEM And the Lady Marion.

[EFFIE enters dressed outrageously followed by MARION. During this NELL exits and returns with whatever practical food and drink is required.]

EFFIE *[To audience.]* How are you? *[Audience response.]* Hello Sheriff.

SHERIFF *[Staring at what she is wearing.]* Good evening.

EFFIE I see you are admiring my new frock. I make all my own clothes. I call this my double-decker bus dress. Plenty of room on top! *[SHE shakes her bosom.]* Ting ting!! *[Looking at the table.]* Oh look at this sumptuous feast. It's better than the all-day breakfast at Morrison's! *[Or nearest Supermarket.]*

SHERIFF Please take a seat. *[HE indicates a place at the end of the table. EFFIE moves to it. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM move to sit down.]* What are you doing?

FLOGGEM You said take a seat.

SHERIFF Not you, you blithering buffoons. Wait outside until I call you.

[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM exit – FLOGGEM going to take a drum stick as HE goes but the SHERIFF hits him.] And Lady Marion here – next to me. *[Marion sits at the other end of the table and the SHERIFF next to her.]*

Isn't this cosy?

EFFIE *[Shouting from the other end.]* Pardon?

SHERIFF *[Calling to EFFIE.]* Please start. Don't stand on ceremony.

EFFIE Oh right. I'm famished. *[SHE starts to tuck in to the food. Note: during the following dialogue the Sound effect of the EFFIE eating is heard – very loudly – which puts the SHERIFF off his attempt to talk to MARION.]*

SHERIFF I hope this is to your liking my dear.

MARION It looks delightful.

SHERIFF A little wine perhaps.

MARION *[Not hearing correctly because of the noise.]* Yes I'm ready to dine.

SHERIFF No, no. Wine. Some wine?

MARION Oh thank you.

[The SHERIFF indicated to NELL to pour the wine.]

SHERIFF And tell me what have you been doing today?