

~~SIR GUY. Know all ye present that the outlaw known as Robin Hood dies this day in the year of our Lord 1194, and that for his foul transgressions against the laws of England, he shall hereby be hanged by his neck until dead! Bring forth the prisoner.~~

~~SHERIFF. Bring forth the prisoner!~~

~~(To a drumbeat, the PRISONER walks onto the scaffold. He is wearing a distinctive green robe with a cowl covering his face, and he is accompanied by four EXECUTIONERS dressed in black.)~~

~~(The PRISONER shrugs off his cowl and we see ROBIN HOOD for the first time. Cries from the townspeople: "Robin!" "It's Robin!" "We love you, Robin!")~~

~~SIR GUY. Have you anything to say for yourself?~~

~~ROBIN HOOD. Yes, I have a great deal to say for myself. That your precious Prince John has usurped the throne of our true sovereign, King Richard the Lionheart, that he has ground the good people of England under the heel of his unjust oppression, and that he is a traitor to the very name of -~~

~~(Whap! SIR GUY slaps ROBIN across the jaw.)~~

~~SIR GUY. Silence! For your defiance, you shall pay the price with your life, now hang this man immediately!~~

~~(Cries from the crowd: "No!" "Please God!" "Someone save him!" At this moment, FRIAR TUCK appears. He is one of Robin's men, a gravel-voiced, tough-as-shoe-leather man of conviction and irony.)~~

~~START: FRIAR TUCK. Stop!~~

~~(To the audience.)~~

~~Save you all. The name is Tuck, Friar Tuck, and we will soon discover if this fellow creature of the Almighty dies by the rope in agony, his eyes oozing yellow puss,~~

his body twitching in jerks and spasms, his breath gasping, with hideous gobbets of blood being vomited forth from his tightening gorge; or if he is happily saved by his merry band of accomplices, his friends like me. What do you think? Shall we take a vote?

*(To a specific member of the audience.)*

What do you think is going to happen? Yes you, madam. Call it out.

*(If the person says he'll be saved, FRIAR TUCK ad-libs, "And I suppose you also believe in the Easter Bunny..." If the person says that Robin will die, FRIAR TUCK ad-libs, "Well you're a blood-thirsty no-good, son of a...")*

Well to answer the question properly, we need to turn back time to the moment when a band of outlaws, friends - outcasts, really - joined together here in Sherwood Forest to change the world, just a mite, one inch, one-one-hundredth of an inch, that's all that any of us can ever hope to accomplish - but we felt the need to fight injustice and want, and to make the world more kind. As you can see,

*(Indicating the gibbet.)*

it was a notion not widely embraced in those days.

In truth, the story of Robin Hood began just as the ballad-monger's pen would have it:

*(Reciting:)*

There's many that sings o' grass, o' grass  
And many that sings o' corn,  
And many that sings o' Robin Hood  
On the day that he was born.

~~END~~

~~(A woman's scream splits the air.)~~

~~HELOISE. (She's really, really screaming.) AHHHHHHHHH!~~

~~(We see HELOISE OF HUNTINGDON on a bed, giving birth. She has a MIDWIFE with her.)~~

heat, and all that money they use to mount the war  
could be used here at home to feed our people!

DEORWYNN. Anything else?

ROBIN. No. Yes. Wait a moment -

*(He pats his doublet.)*

START: DEORWYNN. *(Wide-eyed.)* What's that?

ROBIN. Food. I keep a little bread and cheese handy in case  
of emergen-

*(She's taken the food and is devouring it.)*

-cies.

DEORWYNN. *(Mouth full.)* Sausage!

ROBIN. And a little meat. How do you do. I'm Robin of  
Locksley.

DEORWYNN. Deorwynn Miller. Got any more?

ROBIN. I'm sorry. No.

*(He pats his pocket and feels something.)*

No.

DEORWYNN. What's that?

ROBIN. Nothing.

*(He pushes it back in his pocket.)*

DEORWYNN. Lemme see.

ROBIN. It's just a book.

DEORWYNN. Is it Scripture?

ROBIN. Can you read?

DEORWYNN. Naw.

ROBIN. Yes, it's Scripture. It says, "The Spirit of the Lord is  
upon me, for He proclaimeth good news to the poor."  
It's from *Isaiah*.

DEORWYNN. Let's see.

*(She takes the book and reads:)*

"Ye virgins let us tell the tale  
Of Tristan and Isolde,  
He saw her dancing in the vale,

It made his flesh feel bolder."

ROBIN. Hey, hey, hey! Give me that! -

DEORWYNN. "He kissed her in the valley

And he kissed her on the shore -"

ROBIN. Hey!

DEORWYNN. "As the naked light was rising

Then he kissed her all the more?!"

ROBIN. Stop! You're a fraud.

DEORWYNN. *I'm* a fraud? You said it was Scripture!

ROBIN. And you said you couldn't read!

DEORWYNN. "Naked"?!

ROBIN. It says the light was naked.

DEORWYNN. Where did you get it?

ROBIN. I wrote it.

DEORWYNN. That makes it worse.

ROBIN. It's literature!

DEORWYNN. It's terrible!

ROBIN. Would you just-just-just -

*(He grabs it back.)*

Thank you.

*(Beat.)*

*(Then they share a laugh.)*

Now what?

DEORWYNN. My father?

ROBIN. Right.

DEORWYNN. You said you'd go back for him.

ROBIN. I did. Yes. Only I wonder -

*(He's trying to save her feelings.)*

I wonder if he's still -

DEORWYNN. Alive? Oh he's alive all right. They'll want to  
get some work out of him. Of course I suppose they  
won't get much if he's lost his... *[Hands.]*

END

## Sheriff, Sir Guy

Scene Six  
Council of War

(A room in Nottingham Castle. SIR GUY, upset, is holding a sheaf of papers, and the SHERIFF is trying to placate him.)

START:

SHERIFF. His name is Robin Hood. You-you met him a few weeks ago, don't you remember? He knocked you down and took that girl right from under your -

SIR GUY. I remember! I didn't know he was an *outlaw*. I have reports from every sheriff in the county.

(Reading the papers:)

"Interference with tax collection."

"Robbery."

"Undressing of Baron." Undressing -?

SHERIFF. Waylaid Sir Mortimer, robbed him and sent him home stark naked with a sign around his neck that said, "Chestnuts for sale, see below."

SIR GUY. This is insufferable!

SHERIFF. Oh yes. He's-he's ruthless. He's actually of noble birth, but he's a Saxon, so we took his castle and all his property and now he lives in the forest.

SIR GUY. The forest?

SHERIFF. Oh yes. With a band of followers. They call themselves the Happy Men. No. The Merry Men. That's it. And they help the poor and make nothing but trouble.

SIR GUY. The poor?

SHERIFF. Yes, he's a sort of champion for them. He gives them medicines and clothes -

SIR GUY. Well why don't you catch him?!

SHERIFF. I-I've tried to catch him but it's like threading a needle! I've sent my very best men to the forest, I told them to find him, *and* the girl, but he's hard to pin down, he's just so clever, and he pulls all sorts of roguish tricks, like that one he did to you with the

button when he made your head go up and down like a puppet, which is how he got my sword out of my -

SIR GUY. Shut up, *shut up*, SHUT UP! One more word and I will stretch you on a rack until I can sell you for parchment!

(The SHERIFF starts to speak, but SIR GUY gives him a final warning:)

No!

(The SHERIFF pulls out a notebook and writes SIR GUY a note. It stretches to the other side of the paper. SIR GUY reads it:)

"But how do you suggest we catch them?"

Dolt.

I have a plan.

END

FRIAR TUCK. There were no secrets in the halls of Nottingham Castle, and word spread quickly that Sir Guy had a plan for the destruction of Robin. Some believed that Sir Guy had a scheme to set all of Sherwood aflame, then grab the robbers as they groped their way out of the charred remains. Others that Sir Guy had designs to ambush Robin and the peasant girl he so deeply despised, and to that end, he imported mercenaries from the steppes of the Baltic, Magyars, who were now roaming Sherwood Forest in search of their prey.

(A screech of sound, then birdsong. The sky lightens, and now we're in:)

Scene Eight  
Nottingham Castle

*(The Great Hall of Nottingham Castle, three weeks later. The hall is filled with the Barons of the Northern Shires, and there is a buzz of talking, clanging, and laughter.)*

*(We hear a fanfare of trumpets, and the SHERIFF announces:)*

SHERIFF. All rise for His Highness Prince John: Duke of Normandy, Count of Anjou and High Lord of Ireland.

*(The SHERIFF indicates to the audience that they should rise:)*

All rise. *All rise!*

*(And they do. Then PRINCE JOHN enters and acknowledges the adulation and basks in it. PRINCE JOHN is a dangerous, calculating, and courteous man who is all smiles and bonhomie at the moment. He greets members of the audience, treating them as barons.)*

**START** PRINCE JOHN. Thank you, thank you for coming. Geoffrey à Bland, how *are* you? You were looking so well the last time we met. Ha! And Sir Denis of Galway. How's that wife of yours? We used to call her the Hound of Hello! Is that Cornwall? Greetings! It's been ages! Still managing on one leg, I see. No growth in the other one yet? Ha! Thank you, thank you. You may now sit down.

*(By this time MARIAN and SIR GUY have followed him into the room, and PRINCE JOHN proclaims:)*

All the world's a stage, and all you men and women full of layers. My God, that was almost perfect. I should be a poet. Eh? Ha?!

I hereby welcome you to our meeting of the Barons of the Northern Shires here at Nottingham Castle, which is owned by our host, the charming and sometimes

reliable Sir Guy of Gisbourne. Now I realize we have a good deal to discuss today, but I trust that you will adopt the new French custom and put your weapons under your chairs, enjoy a peaceful supper and dismember each other *after* the pudding. Ha! You may now begin eating.

**END**

*(PRINCE JOHN sits, and we hear the sounds of chatter among the barons, which fades as we hear the conversation at the head table.)*

SIR GUY. And how was London, Sire?

PRINCE JOHN. Politics, politics. We let my mother out of prison for Christmas. Ha! And how are you two love-birds doing? Have you set a date yet?

MARIAN. Not yet, Sire. We need more time.

SIR GUY. Marian has been listening to the Saxons lately, and their lies make her nervous.

MARIAN. You do me an injustice. I keep an open mind and listen to the people. They have a great deal to say.

PRINCE JOHN. You have gained opinions on your travels, Marian. You have been taught to think.

SIR GUY. And I wonder, is that quite feminine?

MARIAN. Feminine?! The Prince's mother is Eleanor of Aquitaine, who has ruled two continents and done battle with the Pope! Do you think that she's been asked if she's feminine?

PRINCE JOHN. Oh, touché, Marian. Touché, all day. And if you're getting cold feet about Gisbourne here, you just have to say so. I'd never force you, you know. This above all: to thine own self be true. Ooo, that's perfect. Write that one down.

*(The SHERIFF writes it down in his notebook.)*

MARIAN. As you can tell, Sire, Sir Guy and I have some disagreements.

SIR GUY. One disagreement, you mean. About Robin of Locksley.

Scene Nine  
The Great Oak

*(The middle of the forest at the Great Oak. We hear voices and the clatter of dozens of peasants, serfs, yeomen, farmers, and all who follow Robin.)*

**FRIAR TUCK.** The Great Oak! The site of many a call to arms, and now it's your turn, lad. Are you ready?

**ROBIN.** I am, but have you seen Deorwynn yet?

**LITTLE JOHN.** *(Worried.)* I've been looking all over the forest, but there's not a sign of her.

**FRIAR TUCK.** *(Alarmed.)* She isn't captured?

**LITTLE JOHN.** There's no sign of that, either, and we'd have heard. I believe her father's death affected her mightily and she mourns alone.

**ROBIN.** Still, we should keep a lookout. Spread the word.

**LITTLE JOHN.** I have already.

**FRIAR TUCK.** Robin, it's time.

*(Another horn blast and ROBIN leaps up to the base of the tree and addresses the multitude.)*

**ROBIN.** Friends. I've called you together as loyal supporters of our great cause. As you will have heard by now, Prince John has seized the regency of our country, and already we have felt the injustice of this fraudulent sovereign.

*(MARIAN enters, a scarf on her head so as not to be recognized. ROBIN, however, spots her immediately.)*

Two nights ago, we lost a friend. His name was Much the Miller, and much we feel, much was his bravery, and there will be much more in all of us thanks to our remembrance of his kind deeds and his good heart. But if we let this outrage go unavenged, what are we? Cowards. And I would happily be called a coward if it

START

would lead to peace. But I know these men of greed, and they will take everything that we hold dear, our lands, our voices and our freedom, if we do not stop them!

Friends! We have a sacred duty to perform, which is to preserve England until our true sovereign King Richard returns to claim his throne. Then will the lion lie down with the lamb, but until that day we will carry our battle to the south and the east and the west and the north until all of England is ablaze with our light, now are you with me?!

*(“Yes!”)*

All kneel and take this oath:

*(Stirring music.)\**

Do you swear to help those in need and to protect the poor with compassion and grace?

*(“Yes!”)*

To feed the hungry, clothe the naked and shelter the old and the sick?

*(“Yes!”)*

To fight oppression and remain firm in our love of a free country for ourselves and our children?

*(“Yes! Yes! Yes!”)*

**FRIAR TUCK.** And so they took the oath that day, their hearts a-swell, and swore fidelity to a cause as sacred to them as the causes were to the Knights of King Arthur in ancient days. And as the gathering ended with murmurs of the future, Robin searched the crowd of faces for Marian; and at last he found her walking back through the forest to Nottingham Castle.

END

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FRIAR TUCK. You'd think so, wouldn't you.

SIR GUY. *Locksley!*

ROBIN. *I can hear you, Sir Guy. But we're having a lovely celebration up here, so why don't you come up and join us?*

SIR GUY. *Why don't you look down and tell me what you see?*

*(Each fighter, bow drawn, is at a different window.)*

ROBIN. *I see a coward who's afraid to fight.*

LITTLE JOHN. *I see a villain who'd sell his soul for power!*

FRIAR TUCK. *And I see a rat-sucking worm who eats maggots for breakfast, has rotting teeth and whose nose is falling off in pieces because of the syphilis!*

ROBIN. *And there you have it. Three unbiased views of Sir Guy of Gisborne.*

LITTLE JOHN. *(Peering down.)* Wait. Look. It's Marian.

*(They all look down - and we see MARIAN approaching SIR GUY at the foot of the castle.)*

ROBIN. What is she doing?

FRIAR TUCK. He'll kill her.

*(We're at the base of the castle with MARIAN and SIR GUY.)*

**START** SIR GUY. Marian! What are you doing here?! I thought you were at Nottingham.

MARIAN. I was but I...I came to see Robin.

SIR GUY. I should have known. Marian, he's mad.

MARIAN. He isn't mad. He's trying to save his people.

SIR GUY. You mean the rabble who are out to destroy our country?

MARIAN. That isn't true! Have you seen the suffering of these people, Guy? There are families up there. And innocent children.

SIR GUY. And robbers and thieves! We have laws, Marian! Laws to keep order!

MARIAN. And we need compassion to go with them.

SIR GUY. You're taking his side, aren't you.

MARIAN. I'm not taking any side except the children's. You wouldn't hurt *them* -?

SIR GUY. Send Locksley down to give himself up and we'll talk about it.

MARIAN. And you'd let them go?

SIR GUY. I said we'd talk about it!

*(MARIAN understands everything now.)*

MARIAN. ...All right, I'll tell him.

*(She turns to go back in.)*

SIR GUY. No! Stop! I'll send someone else.

MARIAN. I'm going.

SIR GUY. *(Grabbing her arm.)* Oh no you're not.

MARIAN. *Don't touch me!* I'm going back inside with Robin! At least then you won't burn it down!

SIR GUY. I wouldn't be so sure.

*(She shrugs off his arm and heads for the castle.)*

*(SIR GUY is fuming and calls out:)*

Light the arrows!

*(Shift back again to the Hall as MARIAN rushes in. TUCK and LITTLE JOHN are each at a window with their bows drawn.)*

MARIAN. Are the children out?

FRIAR TUCK. Yes.

MARIAN. And their parents?

LITTLE JOHN. Most of them. We need a little more time.

FRIAR TUCK. *(To ROBIN.)* Maybe you should go down and talk to that succubus.

MARIAN. Robin, no! He'll kill you on the spot.

**END**

MARIAN. John, you'll be caught in a minute.

FRIAR TUCK. And killed.

LITTLE JOHN. *Well I can't just leave her there, she'll be scared to death!*

ROBIN. John. Do what you need to. I have a plan myself.

(LITTLE JOHN starts to go.)

FRIAR TUCK. You know that the minute you walk into that gaol you're a dead man.

LITTLE JOHN. I've got to die sometime. Stay well, friend.

(He walks away.)

FRIAR TUCK. Wait! You'll never make it alone. I might as well die with you as with a mutton pie in my hands.

(They exit, and ROBIN turns to MARIAN.)

START

ROBIN. Marian, listen. I need you to get word to your uncle. Tell him I'll exchange myself for Deorwynn.

MARIAN. We should see what Little John does first.

ROBIN. No.

MARIAN. Why not?

ROBIN. *Because there's no time! They could execute her by tomorrow morning!*

MARIAN. And they'll execute you the minute they get hold of you.

ROBIN. Good. Let them try. Let's see what happens... Marian, she's still a girl. I failed her once.

MARIAN. Robin.

ROBIN. I haven't done enough for these people. They follow me. I follow them. We travel together. That's the bargain we make in life. We're here for each other. Rich, poor, English, foreign. That's our bargain for living. Otherwise we're nothing.

MARIAN. Do you know that you've become the man I dreamed about in Aquitaine?

ROBIN. Not if I fail Deorwynn, I'm not.

MARIAN. You've changed, Robin. You've changed so much.

ROBIN. I have so much to do!

MARIAN. Well it's not over yet, Robin, and I have this rather odd faith in you.

ROBIN. Misplaced.

MARIAN. I'm sure. But that's something you never understood: Out of the two of us, I'm the romantic. Now for God's sake, kiss me.

END

(She kisses him. The earth moves.)

Scene Five  
Nottingham Tower

*(Night. The wind is howling. We're at the base of a round stone tower that seems to go up and up forever. LITTLE JOHN runs in stealthily through the darkness to the base of the tower, then calls out in a whisper:)*

LITTLE JOHN. All clear!

FRIAR TUCK. *(Entering.)* I wish your head was clear.

*(They both look up.)*

It must be two hundred feet to that window.

LITTLE JOHN. At least.

FRIAR TUCK. Well what do we do?

LITTLE JOHN. Bend over.

FRIAR TUCK. What for?

LITTLE JOHN. Your back.

FRIAR TUCK. What about my back?

LITTLE JOHN. I need to stand on your back

to get to the stone  
where the mortar's gone  
to put in my hand  
and pull myself up  
and use my foot  
to push my body  
to get to the stone  
where the mortar's gone  
to put in my hand  
and pull myself up  
do you get the idea?!

FRIAR TUCK. Are you insane?

LITTLE JOHN. Bend over.

FRIAR TUCK. I can't.

LITTLE JOHN. Just touch your toes.

FRIAR TUCK. I haven't seen my toes in ten years.

LITTLE JOHN. Try.

*(FRIAR TUCK sighs with resignation and bends over. LITTLE JOHN stands on his back, holding onto the side of the tower. Then he climbs up the sheer rock face of the tower, stone by stone.)*

*[Note: in the original production, the illusion was created by crawling across three rectangular wooden boxes parallel to the stage floor - and the following line was therefore appropriate.]*

FRIAR TUCK. *(Calling.)* I see what you're doing! You're changing the perspective! Good luck!

*(LITTLE JOHN climbs. His hat flies off his head from the wind and FRIAR TUCK catches it.)*

I got the hat!

*(FRIAR TUCK disappears. The wind howls and almost blows LITTLE JOHN off the side of the tower.)*

LITTLE JOHN. Bloody hell, it's windy up here.

*(He perseveres and reaches the window. It has bars on it. He's hanging on for dear life. He calls through the window:)*

Deorwynn! Deorwynn! Are you there?

**START** DEORWYNN. John? ...John! How did you - ...Mary Mother of God! John, you'll kill yourself.

LITTLE JOHN. I had to see you. I don't know what happened to me. I think it was the dress. But there you were and I thought if I could just have *that*, then I'd have everything in the whole world. Meaning you, not the dress. I mean you *in* the dress. Or out of the dress. No I don't mean that. What I'm trying to say is -

*(LITTLE JOHN puts his hand through the bars and reaches out to her, but loses his grip and starts to fall backward.)*

Ahhh.



DEORWYNN. *Ahhh! Hand!*

*(She reaches her hand out and grabs him just in time. She pulls him back and he regains his balance. "Pant, pant.")*

LITTLE JOHN. Thanks.

DEORWYNN. No problem.

LITTLE JOHN. And what about you? Are you all right? Have they hurt you in any way?

DEORWYNN. No, it's just – they said that tomorrow they're going to...

*(She touches her neck and starts to cry.)*

LITTLE JOHN. It'll be all right.

DEORWYNN. I hope so.

LITTLE JOHN. I'll have you out by then.

DEORWYNN. How?

LITTLE JOHN. I don't know, but trust me.

DEORWYNN. I will. I do.

*(He reaches his hand through the bars and loses his balance again and sways backward, just as before.)*

LITTLE JOHN. Ahhh.

DEORWYNN. *Ahhh! Hand!*

*(He grabs her hand again and regains his balance. They recover. "Pant, pant.")*

The important thing is you care for me.

LITTLE JOHN. Care for you? Deorwynn, I lo...

*(He can't say the word "love.")*

DEORWYNN. What?

LITTLE JOHN. Nothing.

DEORWYNN. Say it.

LITTLE JOHN. Can't.

DEORWYNN. Please.

LITTLE JOHN. I can't.

DEORWYNN. Why not?

LITTLE JOHN. I'm English.

*(Beat.)*

DEORWYNN. Kiss me?

LITTLE JOHN. How?

*(He means the bars.)*

DEORWYNN. I think our lips can just make it.

*(They pucker as hard as they can and their lips meet. Then LITTLE JOHN falls backward again.)*

LITTLE JOHN. Ahhh!

DEORWYNN. *John! Hand!*

*(They miss.)*

*John!*

*(He disappears.)*

*(Splash.)*

LITTLE JOHN. *(From a distance.) I'm all right!*

*(She breathes a sigh of relief, and suddenly we hear an insistent drumbeat of danger and we're in:)*