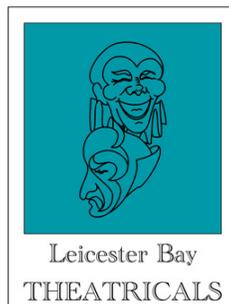


PERUSAL SCRIPT

Robin Hood

Legend of the Sherwood Bandit

Book and Lyrics by
Ed Farnsworth
Music by
Anthony Buck



Newport, Maine

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ROBIN HOOD: Legend of Sherwood Bandit

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Legend of the Sherwood Bandit
Book and Lyrics by Ed Farnsworth
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

1. **Robin Hood** • M — A Saxon noble, Robin of Locksley is an outlaw who preys on Norman nobility. Athletic, charismatic, skilled in all weapons, but unparalleled with the longbow. Late 20s – early 30s.
2. **Maid Marian** • F — A beautiful Norman lady of grace and charm, with a passion in her bearing that inspires respect in all around her. Early to mid 20s.
3. **Little John** • M — A barrel-chested man, he is the largest and strongest of the Merry Men. A master of the quarterstaff and hand-to-hand combat. Stubborn and serious, with a strong sense of right and wrong. Late 30s to early 40s.
4. **Martha** • F — Little John's wife, and mother to their 5 children. A shorter, solid woman, alike to him in temperament. Pregnant. Late 30s to early 40s.
5. **Friar Tuck** • M — A rotund, jolly man, devoted to the Church and the poor people he serves. Highly skilled with a sword. Late 30s to early 40s.
6. **Will Scarlet** • M — A passionate, redheaded young man, he wields a pair of long knives. Often poses as Robin's squire. Early 20s.
7. **Alan-a-Dale** • M — The minstrel of Robin's group, and chronicler of Robin's adventures. Plays a lute. He is also the narrator of the story with his chorus.
8. **Much the Miller's Son** • M — Orphaned with his sister, he is the youngest of the Merry Men. Eager to prove himself and always the first to come up with a (bad) plan of attack, though a poor fighter. Mid-teens.
9. **Eleanor the Miller's Daughter** • F — Sister of Much. A tomboy, she has an avid rivalry with her brother, but unlike him, she is actually skilled. Mid-teens.
10. **Sophie** • F — Norman lady-in-waiting to Marian. Marian's friend and trusted confidant. Early to mid 20s.
11. **King Richard** • M — The Lionheart – the embodiment of the term “Your Majesty.” A powerful, regal, commanding figure. Mid 30s to early 40s.
12. **Prince John** • M — Ruler of England in the absence of his older brother Richard. A shrewd schemer and manipulator, he craves the power and respect that flow naturally to Richard. Not large or strong, he is not the type that confronts his enemies directly, but works to undermine them. Early 30s.
13. **Guy of Gisbourne** • M — Equal in station to Robin of Locksley, though more in favor with the Royal Court due to his Norman heritage, Guy is anything but noble. Large, strong, and loyal to Prince John, he has contempt for all below his station in life. He is a rival to Robin both in archery and for the hand of Maid Marian. His hooded cloak is made from the full skin of a horse, including head, mane, and tail, giving him a fearsome appearance in combat. Late 20s to early 30s.
14. **Sheriff of Nottingham** • M — Guy of Gisbourne's enforcer. A corrupt man with little honor and proud of it. Charged with keeping the highways of Nottinghamshire safe for trade and travel, he is constantly on the hunt for and humiliated by Robin and his Merry Men. Mid to late 30s.
15. **Rowena** • F — A Saxon lady-in-waiting to Marian. Enamored with Guy of Gisbourne, she carries the hope that one day he will choose her over Marian. Early to mid-20s.

Additional Cast:

- About a dozen males and a dozen females to be additional Merry Men, foot soldiers, court nobles/ladies, peasants, and/or one-off characters as needed.
- 6 women for Alan-a-Dale's troubadours
- 5 children as Little John & Martha's brood

Setting: Merry Olde England, late 12th Century

Set Notes: One of the main set pieces should be a versatile, gypsy-like wagon that can open and be adjusted to become whatever may be needed. It would have hooks for things like greenery to be hung on for forest scenes, to hang banners on for castle halls, and so forth. It also serves as the royal box at the archery tournament and as part of Marian's bedchamber.

Special Effects

Act 1, Scene 1: Coach is "shot" with an arrow

Act 1, Scene 7: Arrows "shot" into archery targets; guard "shot" with stray arrow

ROBIN HOOD: Legend of the Sherwood Bandit by Ed Farnsworth Music by Anthony Buck. 10M 5F + ensemble. *(Perfect for Community Theatres, Youth Theatres, High Schools and College/University theatre departments)* This tale of Robin Hood is told to the audience by a band of medieval troubadours, led by the character playing Alan-a-Dale, and centers on the evolution of Robin Hood from a playful noble to a selfless hero. Instrumental in this transformation is Maid Marian, a childhood friend who expects a different type of nobility from Robin than he is initially willing to uphold. Robin is surrounded by his traditional band including Will Scarlet, Little John, and Friar Tuck, and is opposed by Prince John, Sir Guy of Gisbourne, and the Sheriff of Nottingham. But it takes more than just the expected characters to effect a change in Sir Robin of Locksley. *Legend of the Sherwood Bandit* relies on a new character, Rowena to portray the consequences of the selfish decisions Robin could have made along the way. Martha, Little John's wife, anchors the Sherwood bandits emotionally, and Much, the Miller's Son, balances what could have become a darkly emotional tale with the perfect amount of comedy. *The Legend of the Sherwood Bandit* is timely because its themes are relevant, and it is relevant because its characters are believable. **ORDER #3042**

ACT ONE

Prologue -- Alan-a-Dale's Wagon

SONG #1 - Prologue/Opening: The Tale of Robin Hood

SONG #2 - Prologue (part 2)

Scene 1 Sherwood Forest - Road

SONG #3 - To The Fair Banquet

Scene 2 Nottinghamshire Castle – Great Hall

SONG #4 - Silently Robin Swiftly Departed

Scene 3 Sherwood Forest – Camp of the Merry Men

SONG #5 - But We Merry Men

Scene 4 Marian's Chamber

SONG #6 - And Down To The Dungeon

Scene 5 Nottinghamshire Castle – Dungeon

SONG #7 - So Prince John Had Now Fixed His Eye

Scene 6 Locksley Castle – Chapel

SONG #8 - Scene Change/Maypole Dance

Scene 7 Fairgrounds – May Day Festival & Archery Tournament

SONG #9 -- Melé

SONG #10 - Act One Finale: We Must Take Flight

ACT TWO

Opening -- Alan-a-Dale's Wagon

SONG #11 - Entr'acte: The Tale of Robin Hood (reprise)

Scene 1 Sherwood Forest – Camp of the Merry Men

SONG #12 - A Race Began

Scene 2 Nottinghamshire Castle – Great Hall

SONG #13 - And Because Her Heart Wanted Sir Guy

Scene 3 Marian's Chamber

SONG # 14 - But Sadly Rowena Did Lie

Scene 4 Nottinghamshire Castle – Great Hall

SONG # 15 - Heartbroken, Rowena Did Vow

SONG #15a - Scene Change

Scene 5 Sherwood Forest – Camp of the Merry Men

SONG #16 - And While Little John

Scene 6 Nottinghamshire Castle – Great Hall

SONG #16a - Scene Change

Scene 7 Nottinghamshire Castle – Chapel

SONG # 17 - Epilogue/Finale: A Man Named Robin Hood

Act I

SONG #1 -- PROLOGUE & OPENING: THE TALE OF ROBIN HOOD

[Alan-a-Dale's wagon is alone at the right of center. During the underscoring, commoners enter, mill about, and greet each other. Alan-a-Dale's Troupe perform a short dance and indicate the wagon, where he emerges.]

Alan: [singing]

GOOD EV'NING, GOOD EV'NING, DEAR LADIES AND FINE LORDS.
I GREET YOU ALL MOST CHEERILY; PLEASE HEARKEN TO MY WORDS.
FOR LO, THIS EVE, UPON THIS STAGE WHERE NE'ER BEFORE I'VE STOOD,
YOU SHALL HEAR – TUT, TUT, DON'T FEAR! – THE TALE OF ROBIN HOOD.
THE TALE OF ROBIN HOOD, AYE, AYE! THE TALE OF ROBIN HOOD.
OH YOU SHALL HEAR, TUT, TUT, DON'T FEAR! THE TALE OF ROBIN HOOD.

All:

“FIE!”

Alan:

YOU SAY,

All:

“THAT’S NOT SO GRAND. I’D HOP’D FOR SOMETHING MORE.
I’VE HEARD THIS TALE A THOUSAND TIMES. I’VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE.”
“HA HA!”

Alan:

I SAY,

Chorus:

“HA HA!” YOU SAY

Alan:

“YOU THINK YOU KNOW

All:

THE TALE FROM OLD SHERWOOD.

Alan:

BUT BY MY HAIR, I WAS THERE, AND LIV’D WITH ROBIN HOOD.”

All:

I LIV’D WITH ROBIN HOOD, AYE, AYE! I LIV’D WITH ROBIN HOOD!
BUT BY MY HAIR, I WAS THERE, AND LIV’D WITH ROBIN HOOD.

Alan:

WHAT, GOOD FRIENDS, YOU SAY YOU DIDN’T KNOW IN WHOSE COMPANY YOU STAND?

All:

’TIS ALAN-A-DALE, MINSTREL FINEST,

Alan:

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AND HIS

Chorus:

AND HIS

Alan:

HUMBLE

Chorus:

HUMBLE

All:

WAND’RING BAND!

Alan:

MY TROUPE AND I ARE HERE TONIGHT WITH A STORY OF BAD AND GOOD,
THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE – AND COMPLETELY NOT MADE UP – TALE OF ROBIN HOOD!

All:

THE TALE OF ROBIN HOOD, AYE, AYE! THE TALE OF ROBIN HOOD.
THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE – AND COMPLETELY NOT MADE UP – TALE OF ROBIN HOOD!
THE ABSOLUTELY TRUE – AND COMPLETELY NOT MADE UP – TALE OF ROBIN HOOD!

Alan: Yes, dear friends, I am Alan-a-dale, minstrel, jester, jongleur extraordinaire, and, proud to say, friend of Robin Hood. I owe him my life, you know, and— and I’m getting ahead of myself. That’s the end of the tale. Perhaps it will be best if I start at the beginning instead...

SONG #2 -- PROLOGUE (part 2)

Alan: [singing]

IN ENGLAND IT WAS A DARK AGE
KING RICHARD WAS ON A CRUSADE
AND WHILE HE WAS GONE
HIS BROTHER, PRINCE JOHN
WAS THE MAN WHO WAS TO BE OBEY’D.

Chorus:

BUT PRINCE JOHN WAS CRUEL, UNLIKE RICHARD
AND THE PLAIN FOLK, HOW GREATLY THEY SUFFER’D!
FOR THE TAXES HE LEVIED
WERE GRIEVOUSLY HEAVY

Alan:

YET WE PAID, OR WERE HANG’D, DRAWN AND QUARTER’D!

All:

TO A BANQUET, HIS NOBLES HE SUMMON’D.
TO NOTTINGHAM CASTLE, THEY HASTEN’D.

Chorus:

BUT THEY JOURNEYED IN PERIL
FOR SOME SAID THAT A DEVIL

Alan:

THROUGH SHERWOOD FOREST RICH TRAV' LERS WOULD THREATEN.

All:

A DEVIL? NOT SO!

BUT A SAXON HERO

WHO WOULD ONE DAY BECOME A GREAT LEGEND...

Scene 1 Sherwood Forest - Road – Sound of an arrow flying in, and the coach is “hit” by it.

Guards: We're under attack!/To arms!/Protect the coach!/Do you see anything?/Over there, I think!/Stand fast!

[A group of hooded bandits sweep in – Little John, with his quarterstaff; Will Scarlet, with his long knives and red sash; Friar Tuck, with a sword in one hand and a leg of meat in the other; Robin, with his green hood, long bow and short sword; and several other hooded woodsmen with bows drawn. A short battle ensues, and the overmatched guards are quickly dispatched.]

Robin: Well done, men. Any casualties?

Tuck: *[removes hood]* I've suffered a grievous wound.

[holds up hock of meat, showing a large slice taken out of it]

Oh, it cuts to the bone!

Little John: Better yer supper than yer sword hand, Friar.

Will: Just remember to give thanks in all things.

Tuck: I knew teaching you scripture would return badly upon my head.

Will: Don't you mean baldly upon your head?

[Merry Men laugh]

Robin: Now, let us see who our guest in the coach is...

[Robin moves to open the coach door, but before he can, Guy of Gisbourne emerges.]

Guy: Who dares attack my coach? I am Guy of Gisbourne, the lord of these lands, and--

[runs into Robin's drawn bow & stops dead in his tracks]

Robin: And that's quite far enough, I think.

Guy: Insolent blackguard! Who do you think you are, assaulting me so?

Robin: We...

[gestures around]

...are the Merry Men of Sherwood Forest.

Guy: You...

[looks around]

...are all dead men.

Robin: Take another look around. It is you who are at our mercy. Fortunately for you, we are only here to ensure your safe passage through the forest.

Guy: Safe passage, indeed! You attacked me, brigand.

Robin: Merely to demonstrate how dangerous it is for travelers such as yourself. Look at this fine coach. It fairly screams, “I’m a rich man carrying a lot of money. Please, rob me!”

Little John: That’s what I thought when I first saw it.

Will: So did I.

Tuck: And I.

Robin: You see? You should travel more plainly.

[Nods; two of the Merry Men approach Guy, remove the purse from his belt and toss it to Robin.]

There. Without a heavy purse like this, you’re a much less appealing target for a bandit.

[Merry Men laugh.]

But that brooch is so gaudy any robber would spot you a mile away.

[Men remove the brooch and toss it to Robin.]

Guy: Knave! That was a gift from Prince John himself.

Robin: Then you should be doubly grateful. Otherwise, my men might get the idea that you were a friend to the Prince, and he has not been friendly to them.

Guy: You dare imply--!

Robin: I dare indeed. You see, most of us would never stoop to thievery, if Prince John had not already set such a fine example with his unjust taxes.

Guy: You besmirch the Prince’s good name with your lying tongue, thief.

Robin: If truth is lies, then you speak truly, for in my lying tongue lies the truth.

Little John: Ha ha! Good one! *[aside to Will]* That was an insult, right?

Will: I think it was.

Tuck: I’m sure it was.

Little John: Right! Me too.

Robin: And now we must part. The day is waning fast, and you’ll want to be out of the forest before dark, or even I cannot guarantee your safety. Sherwood Forest is full of thieves, I hear.

[Merry Men laugh.]

Leave your weapons and begone.

[Guy draws the dagger at his belt, and Robin’s men draw closer. Grudgingly, Guy drops the blade, and moves for his carriage.]

Ah, ah, ah! Your horses have carried your ugly bulk far enough for today. You will walk the rest of the way with your men.

[Fuming silently, Guy begin to leave. Robin moves to open the carriage door to search the interior. Guy draws a small knife from his boot, knocks over a Merry Man, and lunges for Robin’s exposed back. Will catches the blade mid-stab, disarms Guy, and maneuvers himself behind Guy with his knives crossed at Guy’s throat.]

Will: I wouldn’t do that if I were you.

Little John: Go on! Get yer stinkin’ carcasses out o’ here before we do the same to the lot of ye! HA!

[Guy & his men flee. Alan-a-dale emerges, writing on parchment.]

Alan: “And so, with but a flick of his wrist, young Will Scarlet’s blade saved the life of his trusted friend, Robin of Locksley, the rich young Saxon noble who amused himself playing outlaw in Sherwood Forest...”

Tuck: Aye, Robin. Be grateful that someone you trust was watching your back.

Robin: Indeed, Friar Tuck. I shall surely include Will Scarlet's name the next time I find occasion to count my blessings. Well done, my boy.

Will: *[bowing]* You'd have done the same for me.

Robin: Now come, let's see what treasures this carriage holds.

[Much & Eleanor burst out of the forest. Much is carrying two short sticks.]

Much: That was amazing! Eleanor, did you see the way that Will saved Robin? Sir Guy was just about to stab him in the back, and then Will--!

[mimicks Will's actions badly on Eleanor, with sound effects]

Eleanor: Be careful, Much! You nearly put my eye out.

Much: I did not. Look, I'm Will Scarlet!

[starts waving his sticks around her again]

Eleanor: Stop! Stop! Ugh! You are so exasperating, Much... You're not much of an archer, you're not much of a swordsman, you're not much of a woodsman...you're not much of anything. I can fight and I can shoot, but I always have to stay behind with you, because if we left you alone in these woods, there wouldn't be much left of you when we came back!

Will: Go easy on your brother, Eleanor. He's not so bad.

Much: No, she's right. Our parents didn't think much of me, either. They were millers. They didn't even give me a proper name. If someone asked them who I was, they'd say, "He's not much, but he's our son."

Martha: *[calling from a distance]* Much! Eleanor!

Eleanor: Oh, no. It's Martha. Quick, hide!

Little John: Won't do ye any good, kids. I oughta know, I'm married to her.

[Martha enters. She's a stout, hardy woman, dressed plainly, and very pregnant.]

Martha: So this is where you two rapsallions have got off to! Led me on a merry chase, they did!

Alan: *[writing]* "And suddenly, a ferocious mother bear emerged from the forest, all claws and fangs!"

Martha: Very funny, Sir Sings-a-lot. Where's Robin got to?

Alan: He's searching the carriage.

Robin: *[emerging]* Did someone call for me? Oh, hello Martha. Much? Eleanor? What are you doing here?

Martha: Don't play innocent. I suppose this was yer idea, lettin' them tag along!

Robin: Martha, would I do such a thing?

Martha: Yer charm don't work on me, Robin o' Locksley. Yer not half the man me husband is.

John: Tell him, luv!

Martha: Don't ye "luv" me, John Little! Ye had no business lettin' those two come along, either.

John: I didn't! We left them with you in camp, remember?

Martha: And they promptly ran off, leavin' me to chase 'em 'round the bleedin' forest!

Much: Aw, Martha, we just wanted to help Robin.

Eleanor: We can watch out for ourselves, Martha. Well, I can, anyway. Besides, you're not our mother.

Martha: No, God rest her soul, but I'm the closest thing ye've got, and I'm going t' watch out for ye as if ye were my children.

John: Don't be daft, woman! We already got five o' our own back in camp. What d'ye want any more fer?

Martha: That isn't the tune ye were singin' six months ago!

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[indicates her belly. Will, Tuck & the Men drag a small chest from the carriage.]

Will: Robin! Look what we've found. It was hidden in a compartment beneath the seat.

Robin: Excellent! Little John, will you do the honors?

[Little John breaks the lock with his staff. The chest is full of gold coins.]

Little John: Zounds... would ye look at that! We're rich!

[all stare at Little John]

Wot?

Alan: "Zounds"?

Little John: Yeah. I heard Friar Tuck say it last week. He said it means, "God's wounds."

Tuck: *[amazed]* Little John... you were listening to my sermon?

Little John: *[embarrassed]* It was bound to happen sooner or later, I suppose.

Tuck: I may make a priest of you yet, Little John.

Martha: Ha! Not likely!

Will: We should be careful. There's enough gold here to bring the Sheriff and an army from Nottingham Castle to look for it.

Robin: The Sheriff of Nottingham? Ha! He couldn't catch the plague. We risked a lot for this, and I say we've earned these spoils. What say you, men?

Men: Aye!

Tuck: Nay! Remember, greed is a deadly sin. We must continue to give it to the poor who need it most. Otherwise, we are no better than the Prince.

Robin: Very well, Friar. See to the honest distribution of the funds. But Will is right – this much gold is bound to bring someone looking for it. Little John, take the carriage back to camp and strip it down.

Little John: And just where are ye goin'?

Robin: To Nottingham Castle with Will. As a Saxon lord, Robin of Locksley and his faithful squire must attend the prince's banquet this evening.

Will: We'd better hurry if we want to make it before dark.

[Imitating Robin]

"Sherwood Forest is full of thieves, I hear."

[everyone laughs]

Robin: Well played, Will. Come!

[They move off to the side as the carriage is changed to the Banquet Hall. Robin notices Will fussing with his appearance.]

What in the world are you doing?

Will: How do I smell?

[waves his armpit before Robin's face]

Robin: Like a daisy. You're pretty, but you stink.

Will: I should wash.

Robin: We don't have time. Besides, Sophie won't mind. Ladies prefer men who smell manly.

Will: I hope you're right.

Robin: You spent the whole of yesterday with this girl. You're quite taken with her, aren't you?

Will: No more than you are with Maid Marian.

Robin: Yes, if only I could say she felt the same for me. Ah, well. Here, give this to Sophie. A brooch like this is more suited to a beautiful woman, and I know Marian won't accept it from me.

Will: Thank you!

[admiring it]

It's beautiful...but this is too much.

Robin: *[waving dismissively]* You did just save my life. But don't tell Friar Tuck. I don't think he noticed it was missing.

Will: No, he seemed to be too busy trying to think of a way to invite himself to the banquet tonight.

[they laugh]

SONG #3 -- TO THE BANQUET

Alan:

TO THE BANQUET OUR HEROES THEN JOURNEY'D
WHILE LAUGHING AND JESTING UNHURRIED.
AT THE CASTLE THEY'D DINE
AND QUAFF GISBOURNE'S WINE
TILL THEY'D EATEN THEIR FILL AND WERE WEARIED.
BUT FINE FEASTING WAS NOT ALL THAT ROBIN
HAD A-RATTLING AROUND IN HIS NOGGIN.
"AT THE BANQUET," THOUGHT HE,
"A FAIR MAID SHALL BE --
LADY MARIAN, WHO ALSO WAS BIDDEN."
SOPRANOS: AHHHHHHHH...
ALL: FOR DEEPLY SMITTEN WAS HE
WITH THAT CHARMING LADY,
FAIREST MAID TO BE FOUND IN ALL BRITAIN.

Scene 2 Nottinghamshire Castle – Great Hall – Two tables are set for the banquet, a large one for the Normans and a smaller one for the Saxons. Lords and ladies mingle, awaiting the arrival of Prince John. The Normans and Saxons each keep to their own, with the exception of Maid Marian, who chats with a Saxon lord, as Sophie and Rowena, her ladies-in-waiting, wait nearby. The Sheriff of Nottingham approaches her.\

Sheriff: Hello, Lady Marian. You seem to be lost.

[steers Marian away from the Saxons]

We Normans are at this table, not that one. You wouldn't want to be taken for a Saxon, would you? You and your ladies are too fair.

Marian: Is that so, my dear Sheriff? Only one of my ladies-in-waiting is Norman. The other is Saxon. Can you tell which is which? I thought not. Sophie is Norman and Rowena is Saxon, and Rowena is very fair, is she

not?

Sheriff: For a Saxon, yes. But she pales in comparison to the Norman beauty found in yourself...and Sophie.

[leers at Sophie]

I trust you had a safe and pleasant journey through Sherwood?

Marian: Yes, indeed. We traveled with the prince himself.

Sheriff: Very wise, milady. Several of our Norman nobles were robbed yesterday by a band of hooded outlaws in the forest before they could reach the castle.

Marian: How dreadful! I trust you caught them swiftly.

Sheriff: Er, not yet, milady. But rest assured that it is only a matter of time.

Marian: Thank you, milord. Knowing that you are on the case, my ladies and I shall certainly rest assured... with our chamber doors locked.

Sheriff: *[embarrassed]* Very prudent, milady. Please excuse me.

Sophie: I thought he'd never leave. I hate the way he looks at me. He's like a wolf licking its chops at the sight of a lamb.

Marian: I understand, Sophie. Guy of Gisbourne looks at me the same way.

Rowena: Where is Sir Guy? He should be here by now.

Marian: I haven't seen him yet, Rowena. Nor would I really care to.

Rowena: Surely you jest, milady. You know he wants your favor.

Marian: Yes, I just wish he knew I don't want his.

Rowena: Why not? He's strong, rich, and powerful. Any woman would consider herself lucky to be his bride.

Marian: Not I. His demeanor is too dark and his temper too sharp for my liking.

Sophie: I think she favors Robin of Locksley more, Rowena. He's so dashing and witty and charming...

Marian: And too lighthearted. I hope to marry a man like the king, who carries nobility in his heart. Sir Robin seems to care for nothing beyond his own amusement.

Rowena: I heard the king refused to let Locksley follow him to war for that very reason.

Sophie: At least he tried. I hear Gisbourne didn't heed Richard's call to arms at all.

Marian: Ladies, please. While I'm touched by your passion, remember that my wedded future is the king's decision, not ours. I don't press you for details about your late night rendezvous with your own mysterious beaux, do I?

Rowena: You told her!

Sophie: Upon my oath, I did not!

Marian: Oh, don't be coy, I know you two slip away every chance you get, and I don't mind the solitude in the least.

[trumpets sound]

Ah, that must be the prince.

[Everyone moves to their places the tables. Prince John's is at the center of the Norman table, with Guy's place at his right hand. Robin's place is at the end of the Saxon table closest to the Normans. Marian's is at the Norman table. Prince John enters as the court falls silent and bows. All sit after John does.]

Sheriff: Sire, we are honored by your presence at this banquet.

Prince: Indeed you are. And yet we see empty chairs before us. Who is missing?

Cedric: *[rising at the Saxon table to speak]* Sire, Robin of Locksley has yet to arrive.

Prince: Thank you... Sir Cedric, is it not? Praytell, why is he not with the rest of you?

Cedric: I do not know, Sire.

Sheriff: I would venture, Sire, that like most Saxons, he's probably still trying to clean the pig droppings from beneath his fingernails in an attempt to appear presentable before Your Greatness. A vain quest for any Saxon, to be sure.

[Normans all laugh.]

Prince: Indeed... and who is this empty chair at our right hand?

Sheriff: Guy of Gisbourne, Sire.

Prince: Then where is he?

Sheriff: He is not yet returned from his Royal errand, Sire. I... I don't know why he is delayed.

Prince: Lords Beaumont, Glanville, and Peverel have each told us that there is a hooded bandit lurking in Sherwood Forest who robbed them only yesterday. Do you suppose Sir Guy could also have been waylaid?

Sheriff: No, Sire. He was traveling with a large retinue of men-at-arms. And Lord Gisbourne's reputation is such that no forest bandit would dare molest him.

Guy: *[bursting in, enraged]* Where is that good-for-nothing Sheriff?! I'll have his head on a pike!

[sees Prince, bows]

Forgive my tardiness, Sire. I was waylaid by bandits in Sherwood Forest -- a large group of men wearing hoods to hide their faces.

Prince: That is most unfortunate, Sir Guy. We assumed a man with your reputation would be able to control his own lands.

Guy: Were I in direct control, I can assure you this would not have happened. But I made the mistake of entrusting the duty of hunting down bandits and thieves to the good Sheriff here.

Sheriff: *[fumbling]* Of course, Sire, you understand the, ah, the difficulties that come with such a task. I have a limited number of men at my disposal, and Sherwood Forest is quite large, and-and much of it falls within the borders of other lords' lands, where I have no right to search. This Hood fellow is slippery, and nobody knows who he is or where to find him—

Marian: Pardon me, but have you considered that this Hood may be a Saxon?

Cedric: *[rising]* I beg your pardon, Lady Marian!

Marian: I meant no disrespect, Sir Cedric. But reports are that only Normans have been victims of the Hood, and you Saxons hold little love for us. Except for King Richard, of course.

All: *[except John, Sheriff & Guy]* Long live King Richard!

Sheriff: A fine theory, milady. But as Saxons are little more than brainless pigs, who among them would be capable of such cunning feats as the Hood?

Robin: *[from the door]* The Hood? Are you referring to that ghastly bandit I encountered in Sherwood Forest?

[Robin enters, now dressed in fine noble clothing, with Will trailing, appropriately servile. Robin bows, almost mockingly, before Guy and Prince John.]

Prince: Lord Locksley, how kind of you to finally grace us with your presence.

Robin: Please forgive my tardiness, Sire. I just had to endure the humiliation of highway robbery by a common forest brigand in a hood.

Prince: You were robbed by the Hood? You, a Saxon?

Robin: Yes indeed, Sire. The knave didn't seem particularly concerned what I was, so long as he got my money.

Marian: My apologies, Sir Cedric.

[they nod to one another]

Robin: What ho, Sir Guy? Aren't these your lands? Have you no Sheriff to keep travelers safe in your own shire? Your little section of the wood isn't even a hundred acres!

Sheriff: It's actually quite a bit larger than—

Robin: Yes, yes, yes, I'm sure it seems that way when one is nearsighted. Oh, Sir Guy, you really should have your sheriff take lessons from mine. Certainly no bandits infesting the Locksley portion of Sherwood, I can assure you!

Guy: *[dryly]* Bully for you.

Robin: Ah, Lady Marian, it is a great pleasure to see you again.

Marian: I'm sure it is, Sir Robin. How fortunate that you survived your encounter with the Hood unscathed. Strange that the Hood should rob you both in such quick succession. Had you traveled together, you may have prevented it.

Robin: What? Sir Guy, you were robbed as well?

Guy: Aye. The knaves stole my gold, my coach and my brooch – a treasured gift from our beloved Prince John.

Prince: Then you lost everything you were carrying?

Guy: Yes Sire, everything.

Robin: Did you not have an escort to protect you?

Guy: Indeed I did, but they were upon us so quickly that nothing could be done. Rest assured this “Hood” and his men will be captured and dealt with.

Marian: I must say, the news of this Hood is most distressing, but not surprising.

Sheriff: How so, milady?

Marian: King Richard's absence is felt keenly by both Norman and Saxon alike.

Nobles: Aye!/Hear, hear!/Etc.

Marian: With so many good nobles departed with him, there are few left to care for the common folk in the manner they require.

Prince: Sheep without a shepherd, my dear?

Marian: In a manner of speaking, yes. It is our God-given duty as nobles to care for the people in our charge. They work our lands, they make our clothes, and we are obliged to see that they are fed and sheltered. This Hood exists because we have neglected our obligations. If we do not rise to the occasion, I fear we will see many more like him.

Robin: I certainly hope not, my lady. That Hood fellow had the foulest odor about him. Until I heard his voice, I was certain he was French.

[Saxons laugh.]

Marian: *[icily]* It is a pity to me, Lord Locksley, that you seem so untroubled by the prospect of a lawless kingdom. I have observed that England's lords follow the example of the one who rules them, for good or ill. King Richard inspires nobility in all around him, which is why so many flocked to his banner. There are many with lands and title, sir, but I find that nobility is more plainly demonstrated by one's actions. And in my present view, it appears that all nobility departed to crusade with the Lionheart!

[room falls silent]

Prince: Surely not ALL nobility, my dear?

Marian: Forgive me, Sire. I meant no offense to those whom my words were not directed.

Robin: I propose a toast. To Lady Marian: a fine example of nobility.

All: Lady Marian!

[all drink]

Marian: *[raising her cup]* Long live King Richard! God save the King!

All: Long live King Richard! God save the King!

[all drink deeply, John sips]

Robin: Lady Marian, allow me.

[gestures, and Will hurries to refill her cup]

Guy: Mine too, Saxon.

[Gazing longingly at Sophie, Will overfills it and spills on Guy.]

Clumsy oaf! Pay attention to what you're doing!

Sheriff: I believe he would rather pay attention to a certain Norman lady-in-waiting.

Guy: Indeed? You think yourself worthy of the attentions of a Norman lady, boy?

Sheriff: No Norman woman would ever sully herself with a Saxon pig like you!

Will: Of course not, my lords. I was just...admiring the lady's dress!

Guy: Her dress? More likely her jewels, no doubt with intent to steal them. Search him.

[Sheriff does, roughly]

Robin: I must protest, Sir Guy! What cause have you to treat him so?

Marian: Please, Sire, put a stop to this at once.

Prince: If the boy has nothing to hide, he has nothing to fear.

Sheriff: This was found in his possession, milord.

Guy: What's this? Thief! Guards, seize him!

[guards surround Will]

Prince: What is it? What's the matter?

Guy: I'll tell you, Sire. Do you recognize this brooch?

Prince: Certainly. It is the one we gave you as a gift.

Guy: Yes, and it was taken from me this very day in Sherwood Forest by the Hood. I saw him with it myself!

Will: No, my lord. I—I found it on the road in Sherwood.

Robin: And you didn't tell me, even after the Hood robbed us as well? Thank you for bringing this to my attention, Sir Guy. I assure you he shall be punished most severely!

Guy: Sire, the Hood's crimes against the Crown are grievous. This brooch is proof that the squire is either in league with, or perhaps even the very Hood himself. He must face your justice!

Prince: We agree, Sir Guy. Take him to your dungeon to await public beheading in two days, at the May Day festival.

Robin: I must protest, Sire! This man has not even been tried, and he has already been condemned to death?

Prince: *[darkly]* Take care, Sir Robin, or we might be led to believe that your sympathies lie with the Hood as well.

Robin: Sire, I assure you my loyalty lies ever with the Crown, and its rightful wearer.

Prince: We are relieved to hear that from you. Treason would have required that we strip you of your title and

property.

Robin: *[gritting his teeth]* Thank you, Sire.

Prince: Of course. It is ever our desire to show mercy to our noble subjects.

Robin: Surely you mean King Richard's subjects, do you not, Sire?

Prince: *[quietly angry]* Put your own house in order, Saxon, before you presume to tutor us. And be thorough, for we now grant the Sheriff of Nottingham our permission to search for this bandit in all of Sherwood. If any are found on Locksley lands, they will be executed and you shall be held liable for treason.

[Not daring to say more, Robin simply bows. As he does so, all the Saxon lords stand in respect. As he passes Marian he pauses, nods, then exits.]

SONG #4 -- SILENTLY ROBIN SWIFTLY DEPARTED

Alan: [singing]

SILENTLY, ROBIN SWIFTLY DEPARTED,
ASHAM'D THAT HE'D BEEN SO OUTSMARTED.

Chorus:

WILL SOON WOULD BE DEAD
FOR THEY'D OFF HIS YOUNG HEAD

All:

IN TWO DAYS WHEN THE FESTIVAL STARTED.

Alan:

IN SHERWOOD HE WANDER'D ALL NIGHT
WOND'RING HOW HE COULD SET THINGS ARIGHT

Chorus:

AND HIS MEN WERE CONCERNED
FOR HE HADN'T RETURNED

All:

WHEN THEY WOKE TO THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT.

Scene 3 Sherwood Forest – Camp of the Merry Men -- Alan, Little John, Much and Eleanor sit around a table talking as Martha cooks breakfast over a fire pit.

Little John: Would ye hurry up with that breakfast, woman? We're starvin'!

Martha: Then maybe ye should come over here and help me, ye big lummo! I only got two hands. And yer supposed to be watchin' the little 'uns anyway!

Little John: I am watchin' 'em!

[5 kids run laughing and screaming through in a big mob]

See? There they go. Eleanor, go help Martha.

Eleanor: No, I hate cooking. Make Much do it.

Much: Yeah, I'll help!

Little John: Oh, no ye won't. My bowels still haven't recovered from the last time I let ye do any cookin'.
Eleanor, I'm beggin' ye, please!

Eleanor: Fine.

[5 kids run screeching through camp again.]

Little John: Careful now, David! Ye may be bigger'n the rest o' them, but yer mother'll still take ye over her knee if any o' them gets hurt!

Alan: I don't like it, Little John. Something's happened. Robin and Will should have been back by now.

Martha: *[passing out bowls of a thick sludge]* Och, ye're frettin' like a wee girl, Alan. Just be patient!

Little John: *[inspecting his food]* Egad, woman! What is this?

Martha: Porridge. Eat up. Or are ye goin' t'turn yer nose up at my cookin' and just go hungry?

[pause]

Well?

Little John: I'm thinkin'.

[Martha raises her cooking spoon to strike him, and John eats a mouthful, struggling to swallow.]

Mmm, scrumptious as always, luv.

Martha: I thought ye'd say that. Anyway, the Lady Marian was goin' t'be at that banquet, and y'know how he fancies her. He's probably prancin' around the castle tryin' t'find the right way to impress her.

Alan: You think so?

Martha: O' course! Och, I wonder why he doesn't just up and marry her? Those two've been dancin' around each other since they were children.

Little John: Probably because he enjoys playin' bandit too much. An' he knows that once yer married, ye have to stop havin' fun.

Much: Oh, he's got her there.

Eleanor: Betcha my breakfast that Martha wins this one.

Much: You're on.

[they shake]

Martha: Oh, is that so, husband? Well, it doesn't appear that bein' married has stopped ye from havin' fun, does it?

[indicates her belly]

Little John: *[defeated]* Er, no dear.

Martha: Ha! That's right. Just remember, dear -- in the battle of wits against me, ye're unarmed, and don't ye forget it!

Little John: How can I? Ye won't let me!

Eleanor: I win!

[pours her porridge into Much's bowl]

Much: Wait! If you won, why am I eating your breakfast?

Eleanor: Because I won. Enjoy!

Much: *[shrugs]* Well, it's not much, but neither am I.

[starts eating and Robin enters]

Alan: Robin – you’re back! Thank heavens. Wait, where’s Will? Didn’t he come back with you?

Robin: No. Will’s been arrested.

Alan: What? Why?

Robin: Gisbourne caught him with the brooch we stole from him.

Little John: I thought you had it.

Robin: I gave it to Will.

Martha: Oh, dear! What’re they going t’do t’him?

Robin: He’s being held in the dungeon of Nottingham Castle. They’re going to execute him at the May Day festival tomorrow.

Eleanor: Oh, no! Poor Will!

Much: Don’t worry, Eleanor. I’ll bet you the rest of my breakfast he already has a plan to save Will.

Robin: No, Much, I don’t.

Much: See? Wait, you DON’T have a plan? Then I lost the bet! Huzzah!

[hands Eleanor the porridge]

Eleanor: What are you doing? You lost the bet, so you have to eat it.

Much: But you said...!

[growls and starts to eat again]

Eleanor: You’re not much of a gambler, brother.

Alan: You mean you don’t have a plan YET.

Robin: No, I mean it’s impossible. Too many guards at the festival, and Nottingham Castle is impregnable. We have to disband and disappear.

Little John: Ye’re not makin’ any sense, man! What d’ye mean, disband and disappear?

Robin: The Sheriff has been given authority to search all of Sherwood Forest, including my land, and they’ll hang any of you they find. Will is going to be executed for being the Hood, and there’s nothing we can do to stop them!

Eleanor: But there are plenty of places in the Forest to hide.

Alan: We must save Will, Robin!

Robin: I tried! It can’t be done.

Martha: I don’t believe what I’m hearin’...

Much: You don’t really mean it.

Robin: I’m sorry, Much. I already have Will’s blood on my hands – I can’t risk any of yours. It’s over...you have to disappear.

Little John: Well, isn’t that dandy! You go back to yer fancy castle and servants and leave US to clean up the mess. Will is goin’ t’die, Robin! He saved yer life yesterday!

Robin: There’s nothing I can do, Little John!

Little John: You mean there’s nothin’ ye WILL do, ye great ruddy coward!

[picks up his staff and takes a swing at Robin’s head; Robin ducks just in time]

Robin: What are you doing?

Little John: *[poking Robin in the chest]* I’m gonna thump yer skull fer talkin’ like this. Maybe that’ll knock some sense into ye!

[Pushes Robin, who turns away and begins to leave, enraging him]

Defend yourself -- if ye've still got a spine!

[Takes a big swing at Robin.]

Alan: Robin!

[tosses Robin a staff just in time for Robin to block John's blow. John's children run in and stop, shocked at the sight of Little John and Robin circling.]

Martha: Come here, children, an' stay out o' yer papa's way.

[children run to Martha. During the fight, the battle swings back and forth, depending on whose line it is.]

Little John: Look at ye – a rich, spoiled brat! Did ye think this was all just a game?

Robin: What would you have me do, Little John? As a noble I have an obligation – a responsibility! -- to the people of my lands! They're all Saxons. What do you think would happen to them if my lands were given to a man like Gisbourne?

Little John: I don't know. But I do know what'll happen to Will if ye don't help him!

Robin: Gisbourne would bleed them dry. I have to think of my people first!

Little John: Will IS one o' yer people, ye daft buzzard! Look at ye...yer so afraid t'lose yer money that ye won't help yer friends!

Robin: My money is what has kept you and your children from starving in the forest!

Little John: Codswollop! We were outlaws livin' off this forest long before you came along, yer lordship!

Robin: And barely surviving!

[knocks Little John down]

I put clothes on your children's backs and shoes on your wife's feet!

Little John: I always knew ye thought ye were better than the rest of us!

[John rises and cracks Robin across the head, stunning him. John turns away in disgust. Robin recovers and charges John's unprotected back. John blocks his blow, yanks the staff from Robin's grasp, then knocks him down. Enraged beyond all reason, John raises his staff for what looks to be a killing blow.]

Martha: *[stepping between them]* John!

Little John: *[hesitating]* What're ye doin' woman? Get out of m'way!

[Martha puts a hand on his chest, then patiently extends her other. John's rage subsides, and he gives up his staff to her. She removes her shoes, and tosses them down in front of Robin, then stands beside John.]

Little John: Who's with me?

[All but Robin fall in behind Little John and they start to leave.]

Robin: *[quietly]* It's suicide.

Little John: Maybe so, but I'd rather die tryin' than live with the shame o' doin' nothin'.

SONG #5 -- BUT WE MERRY MEN

Alan: *[singing]*

BUT WE MERRY MEN WERE NOT ALONE

YET AT THE TIME WE COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN

THAT ANOTHER WOULD CRY
IF YOUNG WILL SHOULD DIE
FOR TRUE LOVE IN HER HEART WAS ENTHRONED.

Scene 4 Marian's Chamber

Marian: I cannot believe that a squire is the Hood. Though Robin of Locksley is so absent-minded, if it were to happen under anyone's nose, it would be his.

Rowena: I wonder if he'll lose his head at the start or the end of the festival...

[Sophie sobs]

Sophie? Are you crying?

Sophie: *[weeping]* No.

Marian: It's alright, you can tell us.

Sophie: *[nodding]* Th-there's something you don't know about him, milady.

Marian: What is it?

Sophie: Well, you know how I've been slipping away to meet a young man?

Rowena: You don't mean it's that Saxon squire?!

[Sophie cries harder & buries her face in her hands, nodding]

Oh, Sophie, no! You could have your pick of almost any Norman man. Why would you let yourself fall for a Saxon?

Marian: Rowena! Why do you say such things when you are Saxon yourself?

Rowena: I say them because I am Saxon, and I know it limits my choices. Milady, you are a very kind mistress, but as a Saxon woman, my only hope for a better life is in marriage to a Norman. I cannot understand Sophie's decision.

Sophie: I wanted to tell you about Will Scarlet before, but I was too ashamed for the very reasons Rowena named. Not only is he Saxon, but a commoner, too!

Marian: It's alright, Sophie.

Sophie: Oh, Lady Marian, Will is going to die, and I know he is innocent!

Rowena: No, he isn't. He was caught red-handed with Sir Guy's brooch.

Marian: And it won't be long before he tells them where he's hidden all he stole from Lords Beaumont, Glanville, and Peverel.

Sophie: But that's just it, milady – the day before the banquet, Will and I were together from dawn until sunset, and those lords each arrived at the castle before dark.

Rowena: You had me say that you were "indisposed" in your chambers!

Marian: Hush, Rowena.

[to Sophie]

Do you swear to me that you speak the truth?

Sophie: Yes, Lady Marian.

Marian: And would you also swear it before Prince John and Sir Guy?

Sophie: Yes, milady.

Marian: Then come quickly! It may mean the difference between your young man's life and death.

Rowena: Are you sure, Lady Marian? He still had the brooch, which means he's probably one of the Hood's men, and Prince John has decreed that any of the Hood's men will be executed.

Marian: I know, Rowena, but we still must try. King Richard would listen.

Rowena: But King Richard isn't here. You must convince Prince John.

SONG #6 -- AND DOWN TO THE DUNGEON

Alan: [singing]

AND DOWN TO THE DUNGEONS THEY FLEW
TO TESTIFY OF WHAT THEY KNEW.
THEY HOPED WILL'S LIFE TO SAVE
FROM AN EARLY GRAVE
OR AT LEAST TO BE SAV'D FROM THE THUMBSCREWS.

Scene 5 Nottinghamshire Castle – Dungeon -- Will is caged, undergoing interrogation by Prince John, Guy, and the Sheriff. A poker heats in a bed of coals.

Prince: Where is the gold you stole?

Will: I don't have any gold. I only found the brooch.

Guy: Don't be foolish. I promise you a quick, clean death if you'll only cooperate.

[Will spits in his eye.]

Still defiant. Sheriff?

[Sheriff pulls the glowing poker and moves to brand Will with it. Marian, Sophie, and Rowena enter. They gasp at the sight of Will. Men turn.]

Sophie: Will--!

Sheriff: *[grinning]* Sophie?

Rowena: *[blushing]* Sir Guy.

Guy: Lady Marian! This is an unexpected pleasure.

Prince: My dear, what brings you down here? This is no place for ladies.

Marian: *[bowing]* Please forgive our intrusion, Sire, but one of my ladies has important information about the prisoner that may inspire your clemency.

Prince: Indeed? So far, he has told us nothing. What information do you bring?

Marian: My lady Sophie is...well-acquainted with the prisoner. She can confirm that he is not the Hood you're looking for.

Guy: He had the brooch on him.

Marian: Yes, Sir Guy, but Sophie will swear the prisoner was with her the whole of the day before yesterday, when Lords Beaumont, Glanville, and Peverel were robbed in Sherwood.

Prince: Is this true, girl? Look us in the eye and swear it.

Sophie: Y-yes, Sire. I swear it is true...he was with me.

Prince: ... We believe you.

Marian: Then you will free him?

Prince: We cannot – the brooch proves his association with the Hood. But your lady's courage in coming forth to admit her liaison with this Saxon has indeed inspired our clemency.

Marian: Thank you, Sire. What is to become of him?

Prince: We shall leave that up to him. If he willingly tells us all we wish to know – who the Hood is and where both he and all that he has stolen can be found – we shall grant him his life and return him to your lady's loving arms.

Sophie: Will, please...!

[Sophie prostrates herself against Will. He kisses her, then shakes his head defiantly.]

Guy: He has made his choice.

Prince: How unfortunate. You have our leave to go, Lady Marian.

[Ladies bow and exit. The Sheriff strikes Will viciously.]

Sheriff: That's for daring to kiss a Norman! And once you're dead, she'll be all mine.

Will: Not ...her heart...

Sheriff: I can live with that.

[winds up to strike again]

Guy: Stop! We've wasted enough time on him.

Sheriff: What shall we do now, then?

Guy: Just as we've planned: publicly execute the Hood's man. This will strike fear into the hearts of his band and anyone who might be inclined to aid them.

Prince: No. That will not be enough. We must cut off the head – hood and all – to ensure the body will die. There are larger wheels turning right now, Sir Guy.

Guy: What do you mean?

Prince: Word has reached us that our brother has been captured in Austria as he returned from the Holy Land and is being held for ransom. We have until Midsummer's Eve to pay half a million gold florins or Richard will die.

Guy: So you mean to leave him there?

Prince: No. While that would make us King, it would also make us look weak and incompetent, and we would spend the remainder of our days fending off challenges to our rule from within and without.

Guy: Then what will you do?

Prince: We mean to use the taxes we've levied to pay our brother's ransom...and then have them kill him anyway.

Guy: I don't understand, Sire.

Prince: Then listen and learn. By paying the ransom, it will look to the people as if we did everything we could to save our brother, but were betrayed. They will fall in line behind us, and we shall take the throne without further bloodshed.

Guy: A brilliant plan, Sire.

Prince: *[turning angry]* But time is running out, and this Hood has been robbing the nobles passing through

Sherwood, stealing the taxes we would use for the ransom! He must be dealt with – now.

Sheriff: I have laid traps aplenty, Sire, and he always evades them.

Guy: Perhaps you haven't been using the right bait.

Prince: What do you mean, Sir Guy?

Guy: I mean, Sire, that we should tempt him to reveal himself at the festival. The Hood is known for his skill with a bow, and the highlight of the festival tomorrow is the archery tournament. If we appeal to his pride, he is sure to make an appearance.

Prince: How do you know that, Sir Guy?

Guy: The Hood took his greatest satisfaction not in robbing me, but in my humiliation. Pride is his weakness, and we must exploit it.

Sheriff: But the Hood has never revealed his face. How will we know who he is?

Guy: I'm entered the tournament myself, and should win easily. If there is anyone who offers any real competition, it will have to be the Hood.

Sheriff: It's a good plan, milord, but we would need an irresistible prize to guarantee he will try to win.

Guy: True. Since he is a robber, I would say a prize of a thousand gold pieces from the Royal Treasury would do it.

Prince: We agree. But you must win Sir Guy, for we will need you to make a very public donation of your prize to Richard's ransom afterward.

Guy: Fear not, my prince. I shall have the victory, and you shall have the throne.

Sheriff: And the Hood?

Prince: May God have mercy on his soul, for he will receive none from me.

SONG #7 -- SO PRINCE JOHN HAD NOW FIXED HIS EYE

Alan: [singing]

SO PRINCE JOHN HAD NOW FIX'D IN HIS EYE--
WITH HIS VILLAINOUS HENCHMAN, SIR GUY--

All:

ON A TRAP TO BE LAID
FOR THE HOOD WHO MIGHT AID
YOUNG WILL SCARLET -- THEY BOTH THEN WOULD DIE.

Alan:

YEA, THE PRINCE HEAVEN'S MERCY CALLED DOWN
FOR NONE WOULD BE SHOWN FROM THE CROWN

All:

AS FOR ROBIN, HIS SOUL
SEEMED TO HAVE A LARGE HOLE

Alan:

AND HE FELT LIKE HE'D STARTED TO DROWN.

Chorus:

TO HIS CHAPEL HE WENT

Robin Hood: Legend of the Sherwood Bandit by *Ed Farnsworth & Anthony Buck*

AND HIS KNEES THERE HE BENT
SEEKING SOLACE, BUT NONE COULD BE FOUND.
[music change as monks enter]

Alan & Monks:

KYRIE ELEISON, CHRISTE ELEISON.
KYRIE ELEISON, CHRISTE ELEISON.

Scene 6 Locksley Castle – Chapel -- Robin kneels before a crucifix, hands clasped, eyes heavenward. Friar Tuck enters behind him, silently crosses himself, and sits on the pew beside Robin.

Robin: Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

Tuck: I am not a priest, Robin, just a humble friar. I cannot give you absolution.

Robin: Then tell me I've made the right decision.

Tuck: About Will?

Robin: I owe him my life, but many innocent people will suffer if I lose my lands.

Tuck: True.

Robin: Little John says he's going to save Will, but the odds are impossible.

Tuck: Also true.

Robin: So have I made the right choice to stay out of it?

Tuck: Tell me, Robin – why did you choose to stay out of the Crusade?

Robin: Do you always answer a question with a question?

Tuck: *[wryly]* Do you?

Robin: I tried to go with King Richard. In fact, I was one of the first to volunteer...

[Robin drops to a knee as Richard enters, and they converse in this flashback interaction as if Tuck is not there.]

Robin: Your Majesty, I am yours to command. When do we depart?

Richard: I shall leave in a fortnight, but I wish you to remain in England.

Robin: Your Majesty?

Richard: Robin, when I leave for this Crusade, I trust my own fate to God's hands. But my subjects still require good men here to care for them until I return, and you are one of the best men I know. I need you here.

Robin: I do not understand, Your Majesty. As a noble, it is my duty to follow my king when he goes to war!

Richard: If a man is noble, Locksley, it is not because of an inherited title or lands. Your fathers had land and title, but they achieved nobility as they justly ruled the people over whom they had lordship.

Robin: But—

Richard: As I will serve God in the Holy Land, so I ask you to serve me by remaining with my subjects, protecting them from those who would seek to oppress them in my absence. Will you do this for me?

Robin: Yes, Your Majesty, upon my solemn vow.

[flashback ends, Richard exits]

Tuck: So you're torn between your loyalty to the friend who saved your life...

Robin: And the vow I made to King Richard.

Tuck: Believe it or not, I understand, Robin. Will is my friend, too. And I've had to decide between loyalty to my friend and my vow to the King of Kings.

Robin: What did you choose?

Tuck: I'm going with Little John to try to save Will.

Robin: That's easy for you to say. You took a vow of poverty. You have less to lose.

Tuck: Perhaps. But a man profits nothing to own the world, if he loses his soul...or betrays his conscience.

Robin: It will be certain death when you're caught! Not even the Church can protect you from high treason to the Crown! What will happen to all the people in your flock? Who will care for them if you're dead?

Tuck: I supposed I'll have to leave them in His hands. If I die trying to save Will, so be it. He died to save His friends, and I could not call myself His follower if I wasn't willing to do the same for one of mine.

Robin: I feel so lost, Friar. Tell me what to do, and I'll do it.

Tuck: You are the only one who can do that, Robin, because you are the only one who has to live with yourself afterward. Goodbye, my friend.

[Tuck leaves, and Robin kneels before the crucifix, bowing his head.]

SONG #8 -- SCENE CHANGE/MAYPOLE DANCE

Scene 7 Fairgrounds – May Day Festival & Archery Tournament -- People dance around a tall, brightly colored Maypole. Will is in the stocks off to one side, under guard. At the end of the dance, the pole is removed. The Merry Men cluster, in disguise, trying to be inconspicuous.

Little John: Everyone here? Good. Wait, where's Much?

Much: Behind you.

Little John: Gadzooks! What happened t'you, boy?

Much: It's...um... my disguise.

Alan: It's not much of one.

Little John: *[exasperated]* Much, didn't anyone tell ye the point of a disguise is to wear something that don't draw attention? Ye look like a bleedin' fool!

Much: It's not my fault! Eleanor's clothes were all I could find.

Eleanor: If it makes you feel better, you do look kinda pretty.

Much: Thanks. I think.

Martha: If yer all done admirin' Much, maybe we can get down t'business.

Tuck: Little John, I don't see how we can succeed. Will is too heavily guarded.

Little John: I know. We need a distraction to lure the guards away.

Much: I still don't see why we don't use my plan.

Eleanor: Because we want to be alive afterward.

Much: We'd still be alive. Look, all we have to do is run at the guards screaming and waving our weapons. You know, take them by surprise! They'll be so scared they'll just run away, and we won't even have to fight.

Isn't that a good plan?

Eleanor: Yes, yes it is...for suicide!

Little John: Maybe, but it's startin' t'look like our only option...

Much: *[to himself]* Huzzah!

Little John: ...but let's hope not. Will's execution is right after they present the prize money to the winner o' the archery tournament.

Martha: Speakin' o' which, anybody seen Robin? He'd win this standin' backwards.

Alan: No. The preliminaries are over, and they're setting up for the final round now.

Tuck: Who are the finalists?

Alan: Guy of Gisbourne for sure. He's the only one who has shown any real skill today. He's expected to win easily.

Tuck: I thought Robin would have changed his mind.

Little John: Ferget about him. He can go rot for all I care.

Eleanor: We're running out of time. Much, go distract the guards so we can free Will.

Much: How am I supposed to do that?

Eleanor: Use your feminine charms to seduce them.

[Much walks over to the stocks and pretends to faint into the arms of the executioner.]

Executioner: Watch it! Oh, pardon me, miss. Are you alright?

Much: *[regular voice]* I think I tore my skirt.

[realizes]

I mean,

[clears throat, high voice]

thank you for catching me. I must have fainted!

Executioner: This area is off-limits, miss. You'll have to leave.

Much: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know.

[Pulls a handkerchief from his bosom and drops it in front of the executioner, then walks back to Eleanor.]

Eleanor: *[shaking her head]* You're not much of a woman, brother.

Much: Oh, really?

[They look back and see the man pick up the hankie, smell it and blow a kiss.]

Eleanor: I stand corrected.

[Much waves coquettishly.]

Martha: Look out! Here comes Gisbourne an' th'Sheriff. We can't chance 'em recognizin' us. Go!

[Merry Men scatter as Guy & Sheriff meet at Center. Guy is wearing the brooch again.]

Guy: Is all in readiness?

Sheriff: Aye milord, but still no sign of the Hood.

Guy: Keep a close watch. Be prepared to spring the trap at a moment's notice.

Sheriff: Aye.

[The Sheriff goes to give instructions to various guards. Guy notices Prince John, Marian, and her ladies entering the royal box, and approaches them.]

Prince: Greetings, Sir Guy. We are pleased to see that victory is nearly yours.

Guy: *[bowing]* Thank you, Sire. Lady Marian, I dedicate my victory to you.

Marian: You flatter yourself, Sir Guy. You seem certain that victory will be yours.

Guy: I am, milady. And I hope that it may also win me a place in your heart?

Marian: We shall see. After all, Sir Guy, of all the archers here today, you are certainly the one I am acquainted with.

[Trumpets sound. Prince John rises, and the crowd quiets. The finalists line up: Lord Andrew, a fine English noble with a large mustache; Sir Guy; and Walter the Scot, an old, grey, bearded man in a kilt.]

Prince: Archers, we commend the fine display of skill you have shown on the field today. In this final round, each of you will be given two shots. To make this a true test of skill, the distance to the target will be increased. Lord Andrew, the honor of the first shot falls to you.

[Targets are set forth. Sir Andrew moves into place.]

Rowena: I thought Sir Guy would get the first shot.

Sophie: If it were up to you, Sir Guy would get every shot.

Marian: It's Lord Andrew of York, then Sir Guy, then someone called Walter the Scot.

Rowena: Walter the Scot? I never heard of him.

Marian: He's probably just one of the many commoners who have come to try to win the thousand gold pieces.

Rowena: Ha! Nobody can beat Sir Guy.

Prince: Let us hope so, my dear.

[Andrew draws and "looses" his arrow. All at least applaud politely, some cheer. Lord Andrew shakes his head, and Sir Guy moves to the line.]

Marian: Oooh, he's just outside the center ring.

Rowena: He'll have to do better than that against Sir Guy.

[Guy takes aim and "looses". The crowd cheers, and Guy struts away as Walter shuffles up to his mark.]

Huzzah!

Sophie: You needn't celebrate so.

Marian: Sir Guy's arrow is just barely inside the center ring. It's not as if it was a perfect bullseye.

Rowena: He's still the closest. And that old highlander probably couldn't hit the broad side of a barn.

[Walter shoots, more applause, more cheering. Everyone in the Royal Box is stunned as Walter ambles away and Andrew moves to take his last shot.]

Marian: I don't believe it – his arrow is closer to the center than Sir Guy's!

Rowena: That can't be!

Prince: And yet, it is.

Marian: *[laughing]* Couldn't hit the broad side of a barn, eh Rowena?

Rowena: 'Twas just a lucky shot.

[Andrew prepares for his final shot. Just as he's about to let loose, Guy sneezes loudly, and the arrow "hits" one of the guards by Will. Andrew throws his bow down at Guy's feet in disgust and they mime an argument. It ends with Andrew stomping off as Guy prepares for his last shot.]

Marian: Oh dear!

Rowena: *[laughing]* He missed the target completely! Sir Guy is sure to win now.

Sophie: Only because he cheated!

Rowena: *[indignant]* He did not cheat! It's not his fault he had to sneeze.

Sophie: He'd better hope I don't have to sneeze on his shot.

Rowena: You wouldn't dare!

Marian: Ladies, please! Behave yourselves.

[Crowd quiets for Guy, watches his shot, and reacts excitedly.]

Rowena: A perfect bullseye! Now he can't lose! Oh, he's magnificent!

[Guy waves to the cheering crowd, and mockingly offers his target to Walter in challenge. Guy proffers one of his own arrows for Walter to use as he steps aside. Walter reaches for it, then pulls his hand back in pain as Guy slices his palm with the arrowhead. Crowd gasps and buzzes.]

Sophie: Did you see that? Sir Guy just injured the highlander! Do you still think he isn't cheating, Rowena?

Rowena: Show me where in the rules it says he can't cut him.

[Crowd holds its breath for Walter's final shot. He takes aim, looses, and the arrow hits the target. Crowd gasps.]

He split Sir Guy's arrow in twain! Walter the Scot has won!

[A deafening cheer erupts from the crowd. Sophie and Marian hug each other while Rowena weeps. Prince John stands and nods to Guy, who signals the Sheriff. The Sheriff motions the guards to join him, and only one is left guarding Will. The Merry Men notice and start to move themselves into strategic positions as the Sheriff and his guards escort Walter to the Royal Box to receive his prize.]

Prince: Our royal congratulations, archer. The skill you have displayed today is truly a revelation to our eyes. Now you shall receive your just reward...seize him!

[Guards grab Walter, who struggles.]

Marian: Sire, what is the meaning of this? This man won the tournament fairly.

Guy: Indeed he did, Lady Marian, despite the fact that I cut his hand before his last shot. There is only one man alive who could have split my arrow while so injured – the notorious bandit of Sherwood. This man is none other than the Hood himself!

Marian: Sir Guy, please. You've already accused that young man in the stocks of being the Hood, and he will shortly lose his head over it. Shall I be next?

Guy: Do not mock things you know nothing about, milady. Behold!

[Tears the wig and beard from Walter to reveal Robin. Crowd gasps & chatters.]

[shocked] Locksley! I might have known.

Robin: And yet the look on your face says you didn't, and that does not surprise me.

Marian: Robin? The Hood? No, it cannot be!

Robin: It is, my lady. For once, Sir Guy and his Sheriff have captured the right man.

Marian: But why would you do this?

Robin: Loyalty, milady. Young Will has both saved my life and shown he was willing to sacrifice himself to protect me. I could do no less for him.

Guy: Your sacrifice is in vain, Locksley, for now both of your heads will roll.

Robin: If that is the fate my head must meet, it is still better than being fated to be a meathead like you. By the way, that brooch you wear is for a woman.

Guy: Arrogant swine!

[strikes him]

You're a traitor to the nobility and the Crown!

Robin: If there's one thing I've learned, it's that a man is only as noble as his actions demonstrate... or so says he to whom the crown belongs.

Prince: Pity for you that I am not he. Such words might have prompted him to spare your life.

Robin: Indeed, Sire. But I think I shall die well if it shows that you are not the king.

Prince: Insolent fool! All Locksley lands, property and title are hereby forfeit, unless you recant and swear fealty to us this moment!

Robin: If that is my only choice, then I renounce my claim upon all Locksley lands, properties and title, rather than pledge myself to you.

Prince: Silence! You are guilty of high treason against the Crown. We sentence you to immediate death! Sheriff!

[Guards force Robin to his knees. The Sheriff draws his sword and raises it high.]

Sheriff: Any last words, you Saxon dog?

Robin: Aye, only one...NOW!!!

SONG #9 -- MELÉ

[Chaos erupts as the Merry Men spring into action, barreling over the guards holding Robin. Ladies scream and the crowd scatters as swords come out and a melee begins.]

Little John: Robin! I knew ye'd show up! Never doubted it for a moment!

Robin: Well, you didn't think I'd let you have all the fun, did you?

Martha: If you two are finished kissin' an' makin' up, ye might try rememberin' that we still have to get out o' here alive!

[cracks two guards' heads together]

Robin: Quite a woman you're married to, Little John!

Little John: Ye have no idea!

[Tuck pulls off an astounding move with his sword.]

Alan: That was amazing, Tuck! Where did you learn to do that?

Tuck: I wasn't always a friar, you know!

[As the fight progresses, Eleanor ends up fighting the executioner. He knocks her over, then raises his axe to finish her, Much taps him on the shoulder, hiding a club behind his back.]

Much: *[girlish]* Yoo hoo!

[Executioner turns. Much swings the club at him, and the Ex catches it with one hand, takes it from Much, and drops it]

Uh-oh.

[starts running & Executioner chases him]

Didn't anyone ever tell you not to hit girls?...Your mother would be very disappointed in you! Eleanor, help!

Eleanor: Duck!

[He does, and Eleanor uses his dropped club to brain the Executioner]

Much: Thanks!

Eleanor: No problem.

[Robin ends up squared off with Guy.]

Robin: Sir Guy, fancy meeting you here.

Guy: You only delay the inevitable, Locksley. You will still die today – at my hand!

[They fight, and Robin manages to take Guy's sword and uses it to hold him at bay.]

Robin: This brooch is lovely, Sir Guy...

[takes brooch from Guy's chest]

...but it truly is for a woman. Lady Marian!

[tosses it to her]

A gift for you!

Marian: Thank you, Sir Robin, but with no lands or title, it would appear you need this more than I!

[tosses it back]

Prince: Sir Guy, end this!

Guy: Yes, Sire. Guards!

[more rush in, and the Merry Men fight desperately]

Tuck: There's too many of them!

Robin: Don't worry, I have a plan! I call it, "Dance Around the Maypole!" Little John, I'll need some help!

[slings his bow over his shoulder]

Little John: Aye! Come on, luv! You too, Friar!

[They heft the Maypole horizontally and line themselves up with the guards.]

Alan: Hurry up, will you? I'm a lover, not a fighter!

Little John: Heads up, Alan, we're comin' yer way! One, two, three!

[They rush the guards, using the pole to push them backward into the Royal Box, knocking them all down (while Alan ducks under), then dropping the heavy pole on top of them, pinning them. They rush over to the stocks.]

Prince: Imbeciles! They're going to escape!

Will: Hurry up, will you? That pole won't hold them for long!

Much: *[fumbling]* There's a hundred keys on here! I can't find the right one!

Eleanor: You're not much of a jailer, are you?

Robin: We don't have time for this. Little John!

Little John: Right.

[bends down and picks up Will, stocks and all]

Robin: Very good. Now go!

[to Prince]

I know this party was for my benefit, Sire, but I fear I've overstayed my welcome.

[bows deeply]

Prince: This isn't the end, Locksley!

Robin: Indeed, Sire! This is but the beginning!

[runs off]

SEGUE TO:

SONG #10 -- ACT ONE FINALE: WE MUST TAKE FLIGHT

Alan: *[singing]*

AND NOW, GOOD FRIENDS, WE MUST AWAY, GO BRIEFLY FROM YOUR SIGHT
YOUNG WILL IS SAV'D, AND ROBIN TOO, BUT STILL WE MUST TAKE FLIGHT.
WE WILL RETURN E'ER LONG TO YOU

All:

IN THE SAFETY OF SHERWOOD
TO CONTINUE THIS ABSOLUTELY TRUE TALE OF ROBIN HOOD!
END ACT I

Act Two has 21 additional pages