

ROBIN HOOD
A Fairytale Retold
By Dale Ahlquist

Cast of Characters

19 Females; 18 Males

<u>MARGARET:</u>	A normal woman of Nottingham.
<u>MAGGIE:</u>	A normal woman of Nottingham.
<u>MEG:</u>	A normal woman of Nottingham.
<u>PEG:</u>	A normal woman of Nottingham.
<u>BAKER:</u>	A normal man of Nottingham.
<u>TINKER:</u>	A normal man of Nottingham.
<u>CAPTAIN:</u>	One of the King's Men.
<u>BUMP:</u>	One of the King's Men.
<u>PUMP:</u>	One of the King's Men.
<u>HUMP:</u>	One of the King's Men.
<u>STUMP:</u>	One of the King's Men.
<u>WIDOW GRAY:</u>	A widow.
<u>SARAH:</u>	One of the widow's daughters.
<u>SALLY:</u>	One of the widow's daughters.
<u>SADIE:</u>	One of the widow's daughters.
<u>PRINCE JOHN:</u>	The prince of Nottingham, King Richard's younger brother.
<u>SHERIFF of NOTTINGHAM:</u>	The Sheriff of Nottingham.
<u>SIR GAR:</u>	A nobleman.
<u>SIR HAL:</u>	A nobleman.
<u>KING RICHARD:</u>	The King of Nottingham, Prince John's older brother.
<u>LADY CONSTANCE:</u>	A noblewoman.

<u>LADY HORTENSE</u> :	A noblewoman.
<u>LADY FLORENCE</u> :	A noblewoman.
<u>LADY SHORTENCE</u> :	A noblewoman, mother of Nora.
<u>MARIAN</u> :	A fair maiden.
<u>UNA</u> :	A fair maiden, Maid Marian's guardian.
<u>VELMA</u> :	A fair maiden.
<u>GWYNETH</u> :	A fair maiden.
<u>FRIEDA</u> :	A fair maiden.
<u>JANE</u> :	A fair maiden.
<u>NORA</u> :	A fair maiden, daughter of Lady Shortence.
<u>ROBIN HOOD</u> :	The thief of Sherwood Forest.
<u>FRIAR TUCK</u> :	One of the Merry Men, a friar.
<u>LITTLE JOHN</u> :	One of the Merry Men.
<u>BIG JOHN</u> :	One of the Merry Men.
<u>FLINT</u> :	One of the Merry Men.
<u>STRAIGHTARROW</u> :	One of the Merry Men.

Scene Breakdown

ACT I

Scene 1 – A Street in Nottingham

Scene 2 – At the Manor of Sir Gar

Scene 3 – Sherwood Forest

Scene 4 – Maid Marian's Chamber

ACT II

Scene 1 – A Street in Nottingham

Scene 2 – Prince John's Palace

Scene 3 – A Tournament

Approximate Length

75 minutes

Place

Nottingham

Time

Medieval Ages

Scene 3

Setting: Sherwood Forest.

At Rise: Enter MARIAN, GWYNETH, FRIEDA, and JANE, looking around.

MARIAN

It's getting late. I don't think we're going to make it to Nottingham.

GWYNETH

It can't be much farther.

JANE

Gwyneth, are you sure this was the right way to come?

GWYNETH

Pretty sure.

MARIAN

I'm pretty sure we're lost.

FRIEDA

Oh no, Marian! Don't say that!

MARIAN

Okay, I'm not pretty sure. I'm absolutely sure.

GWYNETH

Don't worry.

MARIAN

Who's worried?

FRIEDA

I'm worried!

GWYNETH

It's just a forest. A few wild animals. Nothing we can't handle. Probably more scared of us than we are of them.

FRIEDA

N-not necessarily!

JANE

Don't forget about the famous thief.

GWYNETH

Who we don't believe is real.

JANE

Keep not believing it.

(Enter the KING'S MEN, two of them carrying a chest or strong box)

CAPTAIN

What do we have here?

BUMP

More taxpayers?

CAPTAIN

(To BUMP)

Or even better: a reward for the tax-collectors.

(To MAIDENS)

You look lost, Ladies.

FRIEDA

We are lost!

CAPTAIN

(Menacing)

Well, don't worry. We have found you.

MARIAN

Frieda, stay close to me.

FRIEDA

B-but Marian, those uniforms. They are the King's Men. We're saved!

CAPTAIN

(Not at all reassuring)

Of course you are. Of course. Maybe you could tell me what you are doing here?

MARIAN

We are on our way to Nottingham.

FRIEDA

And no one knows we're here!

CAPTAIN

No one knows, hm? What if I told you this isn't the way to Nottingham?

MARIAN

Then perhaps you would be good enough to show us the way.

CAPTAIN

(Sinister)

Perhaps indeed.

GWYNETH

Of course, it is the way to Nottingham! Let's go, Marian. We don't need this fool to delay us.

CAPTAIN

(Coldly)

I am not a fool. And perhaps you need a lesson in good manners.

(As he draws his sword, an arrow hits the tree behind him, just above his head. Enter ROBIN HOOD and MERRY MEN with bows ready.)

ROBIN HOOD

It seems you need a similar lesson, sir.

CAPTAIN

(Shocked, naturally)

Who are you?

ROBIN HOOD

An instructor in good manners. Also, art history.

CAPTAIN

(Puzzled)

What?

ROBIN HOOD

Have you ever seen a picture of St. Sebastian? Perhaps you should say your prayers to him right now.

CAPTAIN

Good with the bow, are you?

ROBIN HOOD

Do you want to find out?

CAPTAIN

It seems like a coward's weapon.

ROBIN HOOD

Still, it's good for shooting rats.

CAPTAIN

What's the matter, you can't fight like a man?

ROBIN HOOD

(Slowly lowering his bow)

Not unless I'm fighting other men.

CAPTAIN

(Raises his sword and rushes forward)

Then have at it!

(ROBIN HOOD drops his bow and draws his sword, the MERRY MEN follow suit — except for LITTLE JOHN who only uses a long stick — and the two parties have a good sword-fight. It ends with the KING'S MEN sword-less, having swords held to their throats by the MERRY MEN.)

ROBIN HOOD

Now then, since you seem to know so much about Sherwood Forest, I suggest you find the quickest way out. You can leave your swords with us. We will take good care of them. And also that chest.

CAPTAIN

You can't take the chest!

ROBIN HOOD

I'm not taking it. You're leaving it here.

CAPTAIN

You won't get away with this!

ROBIN HOOD

You are the ones getting away because we are letting you get away...with your lives. Now be gone!

(ROBIN HOOD gives the CAPTAIN a kick as they flee)

FLINT

(Opening the chest, holding up coins and gold)

Look! It's full! A treasure!

FRIEDA

M-Marian, I t-told you it w-was a b-bad idea to c-come into the f-forest! First, we had soldiers acting like rogues, and now have bandits!

MARIAN

But we're here, and I have to do something about this.

FRIEDA

M-Marian, j-just st-stay out of it! M-maybe they'll j-just let us go.

MARIAN

It's not up to them to let us go, because they don't have us.

GWYNETH

Yes, just because they rescued us doesn't mean they can do whatever they want.

MARIAN

You're right for once, Gwyneth.

GWYNETH

I resent that!

MARIAN

You resent everything.

GWYNETH

I really resent that!

ROBIN HOOD

(Approaching)

So, my ladies, to what do we owe the pleasure of your company?

MARIAN

(Evenly)

Spare us your charm, good sir.

GWYNETH

(Savagely)

Yes, spare it!

MARIAN

I will handle this, Gwyneth.

GWYNETH

Why don't you let me handle it, instead?

MARIAN

Because I'm the one who got us into this mess, so it is my responsibility to get us out.

GWYNETH

It was just as much my idea to come into the forest as it was yours. You don't get all the credit for it!

ROBIN HOOD

(To MARIAN)

Excuse me, my lady, but you are already out of the mess, and it was not you who got you out of it.

FRIEDA

Y-yes, b-but she'd like to g-get us into another m-mess.

ROBIN HOOD

Really....

FRIEDA

R-r-really.

MARIAN

(To ROBIN HOOD)

That money was not yours.

ROBIN HOOD

(Taken aback, and then regaining his cool)

And it still isn't.

MARIAN

But you took it.

ROBIN HOOD

Did I?

MARIAN

I saw you take it.

ROBIN HOOD

You saw that, did you?

GWYNETH

So did I!

FRIEDA

(After MARIAN prompts her)

S-so d-did I.

TUCK

(Jovially)

My! My! Three witnesses! Hard to argue with that!

ROBIN HOOD

Hard to argue with one witness, Friar, if it happens to be a woman.

GWYNETH

I resent that!

ROBIN HOOD

What, you resent being a woman? Fairest of all God's creatures?

GWYNETH

Well....

MARIAN

I resent you stealing!

ROBIN HOOD

Friar Tuck, I am led to believe that this woman is calling me a thief.

MARIAN

That's exactly what I'm calling you.

TUCK

That is a serious charge, mistress. Do you have witnesses?

MARIAN

Why, you yourself said there were three witnesses.

TUCK

Me? Myself? That's only two witnesses.

MARIAN

Why do you play these games? You saw what happened. And here you are, a holy man, approving of this crime.

TUCK

Well, mistress, I think you are wrong on both counts. Though I am humbled to be called holy, you cannot say that I have approved of a crime. I did not even see a crime.

MARIAN

You saw him take the money!

From whom?

TUCK

From the King's Men!

MARIAN

Was it their money?

TUCK

Well...of course it wasn't their money.

MARIAN

Whose was it?

TUCK

Well...it was...well....

MARIAN

They were the ones who took the money. Maybe you should be accusing them of being thieves.

TUCK

But they weren't taking it for themselves.

MARIAN

And what makes you think that Robin Hood and his Merry Men were taking it for themselves.

TUCK

(Gasp)

FRIEDA

Y-you are R-Robin Hood?! B-but n-no one has ever s-seen R-Robin Hood!

MARIAN

Robin Hood. So... you are real.

ROBIN HOOD

I believe so. I believe you are real as well. We have something in common.

MARIAN

But you're a thief.

TUCK

Ah, we haven't established that yet.

MARIAN

I believe what I have seen.

TUCK

And I believe what I have not seen.

MARIAN

But...that's...because you are a friar.

TUCK

Or as you said: a holy man.

ROBIN HOOD

(Jovially)

Well! You've met Friar Tuck. You've met me. You must meet the rest of the Merry Men. This is Flint.

FLINT

(Tipping his hat)

Mistress.

ROBIN HOOD

And this is Straightarrow.

STRAIGHTARROW

(Tipping his hat)

Mistress.

ROBIN HOOD

So called because he can't shoot straight at all!

(The MERRY MEN laugh)

ROBIN HOOD

This is Big John.

BIG JOHN

(Tipping his hat)

Mistress.

MARIAN

And why would they call you Big John?

BIG JOHN

What else would they call me?

MARIAN

Well...perhaps...Little John?

(The MERRY MEN erupt in laughter again)

BIG JOHN

They could never call me Little John!

MARIAN

But...why not?

BIG JOHN

That name has already been taken. This is Little John!

LITTLE JOHN

Greetings, Mistress.

MARIAN

You look familiar.

LITTLE JOHN

And so do you, Mistress. I believe this is yours.

(Hands her a necklace)

MARIAN

My necklace! Where did you get that?

LITTLE JOHN

From your neck. It was careless of you to leave it there.

MARIAN

More stealing!

LITTLE JOHN

(Turns to ROBIN)

I'll let you sort this one out, Robin. I've had a long day, and I haven't even had breakfast yet.

BIG JOHN

(Good-naturedly)

The longest you've gone without breakfast, Little John.

LITTLE JOHN

(The same good spirit)

Perhaps I'll eat you for breakfast, Big John. But then I'll still be hungry!

(The MERRY MEN all laugh)

MARIAN

(Stiffly)

You seem to take all of this very lightly, but you have lived up to your reputation of being a band of thieves. I'm not sure why you are even the stuff of legend. And now we will take our leave of you, thank you.

ROBIN HOOD

Some people just don't appreciate a good rescue.

GWYNETH

We didn't need to be rescued.

ROBIN HOOD

Our mistake, obviously.

GWYNETH

We know how to fight, too!

ROBIN HOOD

You do?

FRIEDA

We do?

GWYNETH

It's easy to be brave when you're holding a sword.

ROBIN HOOD

I admit, it helps.

BIG JOHN

But knowing how to use the sword also helps.

GWYNETH

It can't be that difficult. It's just a big knife.

BIG JOHN

Yes, but it's not a butter knife.

GWYNETH

If you want to fight, let's fight!

ROBIN HOOD

(Still jovial)

Very well! Give us a demonstration. The King's Men kindly left their swords behind. So there are plenty to go around.

GWYNETH

We are ready!

MARIAN

Gwyneth, are you sure this isn't ridiculous?

GWYNETH

Marian, haven't you always wanted to swing a sword?

MARIAN

It's not what I imagined I would do when I woke up this morning.

ROBIN HOOD

Swords for the ladies!

BIG JOHN

(Offering a sword to JANE)

Will you join in the contest, mistress?

JANE

Why not?

FLINT

(To FRIEDA)

Mistress, a sword?

FRIEDA

No-no, I'm too afraid...that you might get hurt.

FLINT

Ah, I appreciate that. Then I'll sit out.

ROBIN HOOD

We will go three-on-three then.

GWYNETH

(To LITTLE JOHN)

Where's your sword?

LITTLE JOHN

Why use a sword when a good stick will do?

(The two sides stand off and ready their weapons)

TUCK

A fair fight, please! And if something happens, don't worry. I perform burials.

(The fight begins. ROBIN HOOD paired with MARIAN, BIG JOHN with JANE, LITTLE JOHN with GWYNETH.)

ROBIN HOOD

You never told me your name.

MARIAN

The entire introduction has been unconventional.

BIG JOHN

Are you enjoying yourself, mistress?

JANE

It is not as tedious as I had imagined.

GWYNETH

You fight pretty well...for a man.

LITTLE JOHN

I was about to say the same thing.

GWYNETH

Why, you—!

(She strikes hard at him and knocks the stick from his hands)

LITTLE JOHN

Please don't hurt me! I never had breakfast!

(The other two men suddenly find their swords knocked away from them, and all three stand disarmed, with the maidens pointing swords at their chests)

GWYNETH

(Triumphantly)

So, you see?

BIG JOHN

Defeated by women! In dresses! How humiliating!

FRIEDA

Th-that was too easy.

GWYNETH

What are you talking about?!

MARIAN

It did seem a little too easy, Gwyneth.

GWYNETH

(To LITTLE JOHN, angrily)

Were you giving us your best fight?

LITTLE JOHN

Well, I told you I never had breakfast.

GWYNETH

(To ROBIN HOOD)

What about you?!

ROBIN HOOD

If you insist, we could go another round?

GWYNETH

Absolutely! No holding back this time!

ROBIN HOOD

And just to make it fair, let's mix it up.

(He switches LITTLE JOHN with BIG JOHN)

GWYNETH

What? I resent that!

BIG JOHN

Try to do your best.

MARIAN

(Noticing that ROBIN HOOD didn't switch with anyone)

I thought we were going to mix it up.

ROBIN HOOD

I wanted another chance.

(The fight begins. JANE lunges at LITTLE JOHN, who steps aside and trips her with his stick, sending her sprawling. GWYNETH takes one swing at BIG JOHN who immediately knocks the sword from her hand. MARIAN thrusts at ROBIN HOOD, who grabs her wrist and swings her around so that he is standing behind her, holding her.)

MARIAN

(Not amused at it all)

My name is Marian.

ROBIN HOOD

I am very pleased to make your acquaintance.

GWYNETH

(Not giving up)

Two out of three?

ROBIN HOOD

No, I think we shall leave it at that. Now let's celebrate our mutual victories with some good ale.

TUCK

Good idea!

(TUCK and FLINT and STRAIGHTARROW start passing out mugs of ale. Everyone starts enjoying themselves and they move upstage, leaving ROBIN and MARIAN by themselves downstage.)

MARIAN

Why do you keep a friar with you?

ROBIN HOOD

He reminds us about what's important. And more importantly, what's not important.

MARIAN

For instance?

ROBIN HOOD

Poverty is important.

MARIAN

Whose poverty?

ROBIN HOOD

Other people's poverty is important. Important enough that we should do something about it. Of course, our own poverty is important, too. That is another reason we keep a friar with us. We are poor with him, and he drinks with us.

MARIAN

You are not poor anymore. Not with the money in that chest.

ROBIN HOOD

As you said, that money is not ours.

MARIAN

Are you just going to throw it away? I suppose you will say that wealth is not important.

ROBIN HOOD

Whose wealth?

MARIAN

I suppose you will also say that the rich man's wealth is too important to him.

ROBIN HOOD

You are doing a fine job of putting words in my mouth. Perhaps you should just have the whole conversation yourself. I'll just listen.

MARIAN

Then go ahead and put your words in your mouth yourself.

ROBIN HOOD

I will only say that the rich man has an obligation to the poor man.

MARIAN

And if the rich man does not fulfill this obligation, do you think the poor man can just help himself to the rich man's money? Or the rich woman's jewelry?

ROBIN HOOD

The redistribution of wealth is a tricky business.

MARIAN

Taking from the rich and giving to the poor? It doesn't sound like a business at all.

ROBIN HOOD

The problem is that too much of business is a tricky business. Too many people are being tricked out of their money, and getting nothing for it.

MARIAN

Are you saying that all rich men are dishonest?

ROBIN HOOD

Not all. But, well... Do Prince John and the Noblemen of Nottingham keep friars with them?

MARIAN

(Pauses)

Are you saying...that friars remind a man to think about God, and a rich man does not care to be reminded to think about God?

ROBIN HOOD

Am I? I was just asking a question.

(Meanwhile, upstage...)

STRAIGHTARROW

Robin is the best archer in the kingdom.

FLINT

Straightarrow is saying that only because Robin hits everything that Straightarrow misses!

(Laughter)

GWYNETH

It looks like Robin Hood may have hit another target.

JANE

His bow should be in service of the King.

STRAIGHTARROW

It is.

JANE

But he just stole money from the King's Men.

STRAIGHTARROW

But not from the King.

JANE

Taxes belong to the King.

STRAIGHTARROW

Not the taxes collected by Prince John. They belong to the poor people he taxes unjustly.

JANE

He does not only tax the poor.

STRAIGHTARROW

Name one rich man who has paid taxes to Prince John.

JANE

Lord Locksley.

STRAIGHTARROW

A poor example.

FLINT

Well, he's poor now. Prince John took everything from him, including Locksley Hall.

FRIEDA

Why?

FLINT

Because he paid the taxes on behalf of the poor people in his village. So the Prince kept raising the taxes until Lord Locksley had nothing left.

FRIEDA

Whatever happened to him?

JANE

He disappeared.

FLINT

Not quite.

STRAIGHTARROW

Don't say too much, Flint.

JANE

Wait! You've already said enough! Marian!

MARIAN

What is it, Jane?

JANE

Robin Hood is really Lord Locksley!

FLINT

I'm sorry Robin, the ale loosened my tongue.

ROBIN HOOD

Don't worry, Flint. No secret lasts forever.

MARIAN

You are Lord Locksley? So this is all about revenge?

ROBIN HOOD

No, not at all. But it is about justice.

MARIAN

For whom? For you!

ROBIN HOOD

No, for the poor of Nottingham.

MARIAN

But you are one of the poor of Nottingham now.

ROBIN HOOD

And I always will be. Remember, I keep a friar with me.

MARIAN

You don't miss the life of Locksley Hall?

ROBIN HOOD

I don't even think about it! Lord Locksley really has disappeared. Robin Hood has replaced him. This is a much better life! Sherwood Forest provides plenty of food, and plenty of shelter. Who could ask for a more beautiful home? Have you ever seen a more exquisite ceiling than these trees?

LITTLE JOHN

And we even get to entertain guests!

GWYNETH

Don't you ever work?

LITTLE JOHN

Oh yes, we work. In fact, we have a lot of work to do in Nottingham tomorrow. Would you like to come and see?

MARIAN

We were supposed to go to Nottingham today. But I can see we're not going to make it. In fact, we should go back home right now.

ROBIN HOOD

Then we will take you back home. But you must promise to come to Nottingham another day. Next week. We will provide safe passage through Sherwood Forest.

LITTLE JOHN

Then you can watch us hard at work.

MARIAN

I think we have already seen the work you do.

LITTLE JOHN

That wasn't work. That was play.

ROBIN HOOD

Will you come?

MARIAN

Alright, we will. But we should go back now before it gets any later. We certainly don't want to arrive after dark. Poor Una.

FRIEDA

(A little tipsy now)

Marian! What are you so afraid of? Can't we stay for some more of this ale?

BLACKOUT