

BABES IN THE WOOD

(Copyright 2006)

by

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BABES IN THE WOOD

Characters

Fairy Silverleaf		Singer or dancer in ballet
Sir Caspar (Sheriff of Nottingham)		Heavy villain
The Sheriff's Steward		Character support
Maid Marion (The Sheriff's Ward)		Principal girl
Peter)	(The Babes)	Kiddies, boy and girl or could be two girls, one playing boy
)		
Pauline)		
Penelope Penwiper (The Village Schoolmistress)		Dame
Muddles (The Sheriff's Messenger)		Leading comic
Dirty Dan)	(The Robbers)	Character comics
)		
Dizzie Desmond)		
Robin Hood (An Outlaw)		Principal boy
Little John)	Robin Hoods's Merry Men	Tall and well built
)	All except Friar could be	
Friar Tuck)	played by girls	Chunky
)		
Alan-a-Dale)		Straight
)		
Will Scarlet)		Straight
Singing or dancing chorus of Villagers, Soldiers, Merry Men etc		
Kiddies Chorus		

SCENES

Prologue		Tabs
<u>Scene 1</u>	Nottingham – Early morning on the day of the Goose Fair	Full set
<u>Scene 2</u>	On the way to School (Boo!)	Tabs
<u>Scene 3</u>	The Schoolroom (More Boos!)	Full set
<u>Scene 4</u>	On the way home from School (Hurray!)	Tabs
<u>Scene 5</u>	Nottingham Castle – The Babes’ Nursery	Full set
<u>Scene 6</u>	A glade in Sherwood Forest	Tabs
<u>Scene 7</u>	Deep in the Forest	Full set

INTERVAL

<u>Scene 8</u>	Robin Hood’s hide-out in the heart of Sherwood Forest	Full set
<u>Scene 9</u>	A corridor in the Castle	Tabs
<u>Scene 10</u>	Near Cuckoo Farm	Full set
<u>Scene 11</u>	Interlude	Tabs
<u>Scene 12</u>	Nottingham Castle – The Courtyard	Full set
<u>Scene 13</u>	St Oblong’s Square	Tabs
<u>Finale</u>	The Wedding of Robin Hood	Full set

Note: Tabs closed for front scenes to be played. Front cloths could be used if available.
Full sets are prepared when tabs are closed.

Overture (1)

Prologue Tabs

(Fairy incidental music – Fairy enters right in spotlight) (2)

Fairy Welcome good people, one and all
 Come cast your cares aside,
 Moonbeams await you in the sky,
 Who's for a magic ride
 By fairy wand, through space and time
 Back to the land of Pantomime.
 To a tale once told of two Babes in the wood,
 And their outlaw friend brave Robin Hood,
 Who robbed the rich to help the poor,
 Bringing justice to every villain's door.
 The Sheriff of Nottingham may do his worst.
 His name to be forever cursed.
 Protecting the Babes by night and day,
 Their youth and innocence holds sway
 Against the greed of man for gold.
 But soft – 'tis time this story should unfold –
 To Nottingham on Goose Fair day
 The merry- makers wend their way.

(FADE TO BLACKOUT. Exit Fairy right – to incidental music) (2A)

TABS OPEN ON SCENE 1 AS MUSIC NO. 3 BEGINS

Scene 1

Full set

Nottingham – early morning on the day of the Goose Fair

(On the proscenium arch right facing the audience is a permanent large bell push button and a sign underneath which says “DO NOT PUSH THIS BUTTON”. Sign large enough for all audience to read.

Lights up and music starts)

(Opening number – mixed chorus celebrating Goose Fair day. (3)

There are stalls and or pedlars with trays. As number finishes they all laugh and continue with the business of the fair. This is broken up by the entrance of the Sheriff’s Steward with a bodyguard of soldiers who bully the crowd into making way for the steward).

Soldiers *(Severally) Make way. Stand aside. Out of the way. Silence you scum of the street. Back to your kennel, dogs (etc. ad lib)*

Crowd *(Re-acting severally) Soldiers, Sheriff’s men! Who do they think they are? On Goose Fair day too! Live and let live – they don’t know how. Is it a crime to enjoy yourself? (etc. ad lib)*

Steward *Silence – in the name of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Your Sheriff comes to collect the rents due to him this Goose Fair day.*

Crowd *(Severally Boo!/Hiss and show displeasure) All the Sheriff thinks of is money. More money from the poor. Why should the Sheriff have it all? More taxes and he calls them rents (etc. ad lib)*

Steward *Show respect to the Sheriff or it will be the worse for you. (Crowd move to threaten Steward but soldiers bar their way). Back, dogs! Bear obedience to Sir Caspar, my Lord High Sheriff of Nottingham.*

(Fanfare. Enter Sheriff left with escort) (4)

Sheriff *Fellow citizens of Nottingham, I bid you good morning. (Crowd look at him coldly and turn away slightly). Greetings, townspeople, from your favourite*

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Sheriff (*Aside*) and mine. (*Crowd groan and murmur*) What – not in the mood for pleasantries on this bright and sunny morning? Very well, let me bring a little extra sunshine into your lives. All who sell goods at the Goose Fair pay me rent for the privilege. This year, I’m happy to announce (*All move forward expectantly*) – the rents will be doubled. (*Crowd gets ugly – soldiers move them back. Crowd disperses to deal with each other*). Steward – many will be the visitors to Nottingham this day. Among them perhaps, the outlaw Robin Hood. Offer a reward for his capture and any of his outlaw band.

Steward Be it known – (*crowd turn and show interest*) this day that Sir Caspar, Sheriff of Nottingham, offers rewards for the capture of any of the outlaws of Sherwood Forest. Highest reward will be paid for the capture of their leader the villainous Robin Hood. (*Crowd are indignant*)

1st crowd ROBIN HOOD – a villain!

2nd crowd He is no villain.

3rd crowd He robs the rich to give to the poor.

4th crowd Betray our hero, Robin? Never!

Sheriff (*To Steward*) Men! Silence this rabble. (*Soldiers move crowd back*) So now we know where we stand. Robin Hood is a hero to you. Steward, I said double the rents. A grave mistake – treble them and make sure every penny is collected before this day is out. (*Crowd very angrily surge forward to threaten Sheriff. Crowd breaks under pressure from soldiers and all resume their positions.*)

Sheriff (*To Steward, being visibly shaken by rough treatment*) My authority is undermined. Is there no news of reinforcements for the Garrison? Are there reports of any more outlaw attacks? News? Why is there no news?

Steward Patience, Sire. For in the distance your personal messenger approaches.

- Sheriff** News at last.
- Steward** My Lord. Your messenger – foot sore and weary with the news. (*Play (5) music – recorded TV news theme – for Muddles entrance right. He is dressed as “Postman Pat” with a neb cap and uniform and bag*)
- Muddles** Three cheers for the Postman, the jolly old postman
With letters for Smith, Brown and Kelly
A lump in his sack, a hump on his back
And a pain in his Tagliatelli.
(*Turns round and shows the words ROYAL MALE printed across his back and then faces front again*)
- Sheriff** Hast thou brought news of the world?
- Muddles** No, they’ve run out of News of the World so I’ve brought Sunday Sport.
(*Produces newspaper*) (*Reads*) Front page headlines. Prince John loses his crown in the wash. Fancy going paddling in winter. Clothing prices – suits of armour up. Ladies pantaloons down – the bottom’s dropped out of the market. Sports news – Crusades, second round – First leg – Saracens nil – Lionhearts two. King Richard sent off in the second half. Personal messages. (*He hands out letters and cards before and during following lines*).
- Muddles** There’s a postcard for you. From your mother.
- 1st crowd** I didn’t know she was on holiday.
- Muddles** She’s spending a fortnight a loggerheads with your father. I say, there’s a love letter for you, and it’s alright he still loves you.
- 1st girl** Well I never did.
- Muddles** Going by what’s in that letter you must have done.
- 1st girl** Do you mean to tell me you’ve read it?

- Muddles** Read it? I've sold the film rights.
- Sheriff** Surely there must be a letter for me?
- Muddles** I think this is for you. (*Reads address*) The Sheriff, The Castle, Nottingham, NBG UR2
- Sheriff** That's a long postal code.
- Muddles** (*Opening out scroll by dropping*) Yes, it's a long letter. (*Reading*) I'll read it to you.
(*Chorus crowd round*)
- Sheriff** Steward, clear the Square of this inquisitive and evil smelling rabble. (*Soldiers clear crowd off stage – all exit except including soldiers and Steward. Crowd protesting as they are pushed off. Muddles and Sheriff remain on stage*)
- Muddles** Don't your townspeople love you?
- Sheriff** Never mind that. What's in the letter?
- Muddles** 'Temple Bar. City of London'.
- Sheriff** From my solicitor.
- Muddles** "To the Sheriff of Nottingham. Dear Sir Caspar, I have to inform you that the two orphan Babes, entrusted to your care, will arrive on the morning of Saturday next. The terms of their late father's will have now been published. As guardian to the Babes, you personally are to receive the sum of.....
- Sheriff** Yes, yes – how much?
- Muddles** Fifty crowns a year towards their care and maintenance.
- Sheriff** (*Aside*) A measly fifty crowns a year and the Babes to care for.
- Muddles** Should the Babes die before the age of twenty-one you will receive their entire fortune, to whit – to what?
- Sheriff** To whit.

- Muddles** To whit (*shrugs*) Twenty thousand crowns – in cash.
- Sheriff** But for the Babes that fortune would be mine. The Babes shall not stand in my way. Something (*evil chuckle*) must be arranged.
- Muddles** How do you mean (*imitating chuckle*) arranged? (*Suspicious*)
- Sheriff** (*Covering up*) Arrangements must be made to meet the little – dears. Muddles – these are your instructions, and don’t muddle them this time. You are to meet the Babes, escort them into the town. They shall meet their kind uncle (*patting himself*) here, in half an hour. I – have – spoken. (*Exit Sheriff left*)
- Muddles** (*Imitating*) And I – have – heard you. Who does he think I am? (*To audience*) Hello kids. My name’s Muddles. Can you remember that. What’s my name? (*They shout*) I can’t hear you. (*Repeat business*) I’ve got a very important job for you tonight. You see that sign over there. Well if anybody tries to push that button, I want you to call out “Muddles” so that I can come and chase them off. (*Self important*) ‘Cos nobody’s supposed to push that button but me. Now don’t forget. (*He moves down left to sort out mailbag*).
- (*Enter chorus girl up left and crosses down right*)
- Girl** I wonder that will happen if I push this button. I’ll try it and see. (*She moves to try it*)
- Audience** Muddles
- Muddles** (*Turns and seeing her he crosses right*) Get off. You haven’t to push that button. (*Chases girl off down right*) Thanks kids.
- Marion** (*Calls from off stage*) Muddles!
- Muddles** It’s my favourite girl friend Maid Marion. (*Play on music Marion enters*) Marion. I’m glad you’ve come. I’ve got some news for you. (6)
- Marion** Anything to relieve the monotony. It’s not much fun for me being the Sheriff’s ward and living in that gloomy castle.
- Muddles** Doesn’t he look after you then?

- Marion** He is obliged to provide me with a home but otherwise he has no interest in me. What's your news?
- Muddles** The Babes are due to arrive today.
- Marion** So soon, I must have their room prepared for them (*She moves to go*)
- Muddles** But I want to tell you something about the Sheriff.
- Marion** What?
- Muddles** He's in a bad mood – something about the Babes.
- Marion** I don't understand.
- Muddles** There's a large fortune involved and you know what he is like about money. The Babes may be in danger.
- Marion** In that case I'll keep an eye on them. (*crossing down left*)
- Muddles** I must find out if they've arrived. (*Muddles moves up stage as Kiddies enter left in a rush knocking him over. They line up, Muddles picks himself up centre*)
- What's going on? (*Penelope enters left and crosses right*)
- Penelope** And that children is the end of our outdoor lesson for today. Nature in the wild.
- Muddles** What's that about?
- 1st Kiddie** The Birds and the Bees. But I've heard in all before.
- Penelope** Shurrup. Class dismiss. (*Kiddies exit right in crocodile fashion to play off music. As last one exits a solitary kiddie (smallest) dashes on late left, whisks Penelope round – realises who it is – straightens her uniform and exits right in a very dignified fashion with her nose in the air still to play off music*) (8)
- Marion** Penelope, have you room for two more children in your school?

Penelope Say no more. If you're referring to the two orphan Babes coming to live with the Sheriff – I have already been engaged as their Governess and nurse. By appointment.

Muddles That reminds me (*crossing right*) I have to meet the Babes.

Penelope (*following Muddles*) I'll come with you. (*Turning*) Marion, do me a favour – just see that the beds in the nursery are aired.

Marion Penelope, don't fuss. (*She starts to go off left*)

Penelope I've been trying all over to get two hot water bottles. But they haven't any stone ones and they haven't any rubber ones.

Muddles Have you tried Boots?

Penelope Well I have, but the water comes out of the lace-holes.

(*Posthorn is heard off right*) (9)

Muddles Who's that, Humphrey Lyttleton?

Penelope It's the stage coach. (*Panics*)

Muddles The stage coach? Don't panic. (*a la Corporal Jones*)

Penelope The Babes!! (*Posthorn is heard again*) Come on.

(*They run off right*)

Marion (*Crossing down right*) I think I'll push this button and see what happens.

(*Kids yell*)

Muddles (*Re-appears right*) Naughty, naughty. Thanks kids.

(*He exits right. Marion runs off left*)

(*Incidental music starting misterioso but building gradually. Enter* (10)
severally about six townspeople. The are all whispering excitedly but)
quietly to each other – the word “Robin, Robin Hood, Robin Hood’s)
in town, Robin will visit the Fair today” are heard)

1st Townsfolk But I tell you it's true. Someone has seen him.)

2nd Townsfolk *(Entering)* Wonderful news, Robin visits the fair today. Robin Hood is here.)

(Play on music swells. Enter Robin right with Friar Tuck, Little John, Will Scarlett, Alan-a-Dale and Merry Men. Crowd jostle good naturedly to greet Merry Men and shake them by the hand. Playful pushing back and forth) (10)

Robin *(At centre surrounded by Merry Men)* Friends, I am told that my help may be needed.

1st Townsfolk The Sheriff's increasing the rents.

3rd Townsfolk Trebling them.

4th Townsfolk And we have to pay before nightfall.

5th Townsfolk Help us Robin

Robin It seems to me that my Lord High Sheriff is deserving a little attention. What say you lads?

Merry Men Aye, Robin

Robin He shall not rob the poor. Have I not sworn to help the poor by robbing the rich?

Merry Men Aye

Robin *(To townsfolk who are crowded round)* Leave us now. When the Sheriff's Steward comes to collect the rents he'll collect more than he bargained for. *(Exit townsfolk to ad lib lines and laughter thanking Robin etc. Robin posts a lookout left)*

John But what can you do Robin? You are known only too well by all the Sheriff's men.

- Robin** Well known – yes! And yet I’ll wager I can walk about this town without even you recognising me.
- Lookout** Master, someone approaches from the castle. *(Men take up position to guard Robin).*
- Robin** *(Pushing through men)* Leave this to me men. *(Turning away from lookout. Men at Robin’s right suddenly guffaw and slap thighs pointing off left. Robin puzzled, turns to see Marion has entered left. They greet each other fondly)*
- John** Leave this to me, he says. Now I understand. *(Men guffaw. Robin and Maid Marion break embrace and laugh with them)*
- Robin** Much as I love your company, I love sweet Marion far more. Leave us together for a few moments.
- John** And what if we refuse?
- Robin** Then my friend, I’ll crack your skull. *(All Merry Men guffaw and exit right)*
- Marion** I trust Master Robin that I shall never suffer the same treatment?
- Robin** That depends on how you behave.
- Marion** *(Mock surprise)* Oh!
- Robin** If you give me the next ten minutes of your time I shall go on loving you for the rest of time.
- Marion** I love you dearly Robin, but time spend here holds danger for you.
- Robin** Danger! From the Sheriff! What care I? He’ll not harm me.
- Marion** And yet I fear he means harm to others.
- Robin** Others?
- Marion** Two orphan Babes, heir to a fortune, have been left in his care. More than that I know not.

Robin Find out more and meet me tomorrow. They may be in his care but they shall be under my protection

Marion I knew you'd help but do take care yourself. After all, you are an outlaw with a price on your head.

Robin The price on my head is nothing to the price that you hold in my heart.

(Cue for duet Robin and Marion. Exit left at end of number) (11)

(Enter Penelope, Muddles and Babes right. Comics are pushing supermarket trolleys with a Babe and luggage in each one. Play on music) (12)

Penelope Well I've picked up all sorts at Sainsbury's but this is ridiculous. What were you doing in there anyway?

Pauline Buying Jelly Babies.

Peter Would you like one? *(Peter and Pauline each offer bag to comics who take one and begin chewing – they are obviously having difficulty doing so)*

Muddles and Penelope -

(Ad lib) They are tenpennyworth of nothing these. They're big ones, mind you. But they soon chew away – how are you going on with yours? *(Business adjusting dentures. Muddles finally swallows his after great effort)*

Muddles I'm glad that's gone.

Peter Did you finally get it down alright?

Muddles Yes.

Peter Well done. You're the third one that's tried. *(Muddles pulls a face)*

Penelope Come on. Out you get. *(They lift Babes out of trolleys and push trolleys off-stage. Unseen by the others, Peter goes right to bell push)*

Peter I think I'll push this button,.

Audience Muddles

- Muddles** Leave that alone (*To Aud.*) Thanks kids.
- Pauline** Is it true we're going to live in a castle?
- Penelope** Yes, and I'm going to look after you.
- Peter** And is my uncle a real live Sheriff?
- Muddles** He is. I'll go and fetch him.
- Penelope** You'll stay here and we'll all play a game.
- Muddles** I'll tell you what we'll play...
- Peter** (*Cutting in*) No we won't. – We'll play leapfrog.
- Pauline** Oh yes.
- Comics** Oh, all right.
- Peter** We've decided that you're the two that bend down.
- Penelope** Who's decided?
- Pauline** All four of us.
- Muddles** Have we?
- Peter** Come on. Touch your toes.
- Muddles** I can't. They're further away from my hands than they used to be.
- Babes** Oh, come on.
- Comics** Oh, all right. (*They make backs. Business – Babes leap-frogging over them*)
- Penelope** Can we have a go now?
- Pauline** No, I'm tired of this. Let's play another game.
- Peter** Piggy-backs.
- Comics** Oh no.

- Babes** Oh yes.
- Pauline** We've decided that you two give us a ride first.
- Muddles** Who's decided?
- Peter** All four of us.
- Penelope** That's very good of us. (*Babes get onto backs of Comics "Gallop" (12A) music quickening to ad lib cries of "faster". Comics stop out of breath and music stops*)
- Muddles** When do we get a ride?
- Peter** We've played this game long enough. Let's have a change.
- Penelope** Well, a change is as good as a rest.
- Pauline** Let's do something really energetic.
- Muddles** Can't we skip it?
- Peter** Good idea – here are some skipping ropes.
- Pauline** Oh, good.
- Comics** Oh, heck.
- Babes** We've decided that you two hold the rope first.
- Comics** Who's decided?

Babes and Comics together –

All four of us.

(*Comics pick up ropes from trolley and chant jingle, for example, "salt, mustard, vinegar pepper". Babes skip*)

- Penelope** Just a minute. When do we have a go?

Peter It's your turn now. (*Babes swing rope. Comics, after one or two feints, get in but stumble and fall immediately*)

Pauline What are you doing down there?

Muddles Getting up (*He does so*)

Peter (*To Muddles*) You can't skip.

Muddles I can. I'll show you. (*Gets up and begins to perform short hectic skipping routine chanting to himself another jingle for example "One two buckle my shoe, three four knock at the door"*)

Penelope (*Impressed to begin with and then noticing*) Just a minute. You haven't got a rope.

Muddles Oh, I can't do it with a rope.

Pauline We can. We can skip to music.

Peter Have you got a skipping song?

Penelope No, but we've got an ordinary song.

(*Number – "Just one of those songs" for skipping routine in slowish tempo, involving solo and duet skipping by Babes. Muddles and Penelope join in. Routine suddenly becomes chaotic with Babes taking advantage. Finish with Comics tangled and tied in ropes.*) (13)

(*During applause – Fanfare – Sheriff's escort forms up in two lines left for entrance up left of Sheriff down the two lines. He dismisses them with a wave and they exit left in orderly fashion*) (14)

Sheriff There you are my dears. Enjoying yourselves?

Babes Oh yes.

Sheriff Good (*Aside*) I'll soon put a stop to that. (*To Babes*) Well! Well! Well! Come and give your old uncle a kiss. (*Gives Pauline a kiss moving to her as she does not move to him*)

- Pauline** Oh his chin is all prickly.
- Peter** I don't think I'll bother. (*The Babes obviously do not like him. Sheriff at left fumes disapproval*).
- Sheriff** (*Aside*) Children, how I hate them. (*To Penelope*) Have they been behaving themselves Penelope?
- Penelope** Yes – they're a bit listless – but nothing that a visit to MacDonalds won't put right.
- Sheriff** There'll be many happy times in store for them living with their kind old uncle in his lovely big castle. I'll try and arrange a surprise for you. (*Aside*) An unpleasant one, (*Sheriff's aside gesture is with pointed finger by nose*)
- Muddles** What's he keep poking his nose for?
- Penelope** Shut up.
- Muddles** Is it? Must be this cold weather.
- Sheriff** Penelope, show the Babes around the castle. Run along my dears. (*and he crosses right*)
- Penelope** Come along. Walk this way (*She crosses left*) (*Muddles and Babes cross left imitating her walk*). What are you doing?
- Muddles** Walking this way.
- Sheriff** Muddles, here's a silver penny – go and stuff yourself with sweets.
- Muddles** You go and stuff yourself – (*stops*) with sweets. (*All exit left except Sheriff*)
- Sheriff** Bye-bye, bye-bye little Babes. (*Threatening mood music starts (15) suddenly and continues throughout speech and for entrance of robbers*). How I look forward to the day when I can say “Bye-bye” to the little brats forever. They stand between me and a fortune. But not for long. They must be disposed of permanently (*draws finger across throat*) – yet I must keep my hands clean. (*crossing left*). I must find someone else to do my dirty work for

me. (*Fiendish laugh cut short in mid laugh by two shouts off stage right "Robberies committed" "Murders arranged".*)

(*Enter robbers right and come downstage*)

Des Robberies committed.

Dan Murders arranged.

Des Who'll buy?

Dan Who'll die?

Sheriff (*from upstage left of them*) Hey! ! (*Slightly startled robbers look downstage and off right. Sheriff crosses quickly to U.S. behind them*) You there! (*Robbers are startled and cling to each other. Sheriff crosses down between them*) Am I to understand that for a certain amount of money you're prepared to do a certain amount of dirty work?

Des All on reasonable terms.

Dan Oo, we are awful.

Des We are an all. (*Play this catch-phrase to audience when it occurs*)

Dan Dirty work's right up our street. My little friend here is the most cold blooded killer it's ever been your fortune to meet. (*Roughly to Des*) Aren't you?

Des (*Quickly*) Yes. (*Smiles slowly*) I swat flies.

Den Dirty Den and Dizzie Desmond at your service. Dark deeds done daily. (*They step away from Sheriff in low bows*)

Sheriff (*Grabbing each by the throat and raising them to face him closely*) Cut-throat capers can earn crisp currency. How much do you charge for a (*cut throat gesture and sound*)

Dan A ? (*Business cut throat gesture and sound*)

Sheriff A ? (*Business cut throat gesture and sound*)

- Des** Fifty pounds adults. Half price children.
- Sheriff** And when they are both children, how much for two? (*cut throat noise twice*)
- Danc** Two? (*cut throat noise twice. Dan and Des confer – counting on fingers*)
Forty pounds. C.O.D.
- Sheriff** C.O.D?
- Dan** Cash on disappearance.
- Sheriff** Done. (*Shakes hands with Dan*)
- Robbers** (*Shaking hands with each other*) Done
- Sheriff** (*Crossing left*) Follow me to the castle at a discreet distance. (*Turning*) Dirty Dogs (*Exits left*)
- Dan** (*To where Sheriff exited*) Clever Clot. Oo we are awful.
- Des** We are an all. (*They exit down left. Play off*) (16)
- (*Enter Steward up left with escort of two soldiers. One of the soldiers strikes metal part of stall with flat of sword viciously and deliberately to summon crowd. Enter crowd sullenly from left and right after slight pause by Merry Men obviously disguised followed from right by Robin in disguise. He takes up a place behind one of the stalls.*)
- Steward** Rents are now due. Pay up, or else –
- Crowd** We cannot afford your rents. No. Never. Who do you think you are? (*Ad lib*)
- Steward** Pay up I say. You there – (*Crosses to stall holder who reluctantly gives him bag of money. Goes to pedlar with tray and grabs bag of money and then goes to Robin*)
- Robin** I am but weak. Be lenient on a poor old man. (*Disguising voice and figure*)
- Steward** Pay up! (*Grabbing Robin*)
- Robin** But Sire!

Steward The money I say. Give me the money.

Robin *(Throwing off disguise)* 'Tis I, Robin Hood. I'll give you more than you bargained for. *(Pushes Steward over a back made by crouching Merry Men. The two soldiers are disarmed from behind by two other Merry Men. One is knee-pushed in small of back towards Robin who picks up a sack and puts it over his head. Robin turns him and kick-pushes him in backside. All three are belaboured off by the Merry Men, who have taken soldiers swords, with flat of blades. Robin stands laughing with arms akimbo with everyone else)* Good riddance I say, to bad rubbish. Take back your hard earned cash and make sure the other stall-holders are repaid their due. Just remember if trouble should come your way, send for the lads of Sherwood and we'll send trouble on its way.

(Finish with big bright production number. Robin, Merry Men and Townsfolk) (17)

FADE TO BLACKOUT. TABS CLOSE

Scene 2

Tabs

On The Way to School (Boo!)

(Lights up as incidental music starts for entrance right of Penelope (18) followed by Kiddies in crocodile line up. She lines children up and is about to speak when small kiddie as in Scene 1 dashes on late – cut music- and joins end of line.

Small kid Has it started?

Penelope Has what started?

Small kid The darts match

Penelope Get in line. Now, children, what must we do before we go to school?

All Clean our shoes and wash our hands and faces, Miss Penwiper.

- Penelope** Good. Let's see these clean hands. *(They show them)* Very good – *(To small kiddie at the end who is smiling confidently)* including you. Clean shoes – let's see them. *(They show them)* – Very good – *(To same one at end)* including you. On your way into school, all of you show me a clean hanky. (19)
(They turn and file off left to incidental music, all holding up hankies for Penelope to look at. Last one is small kiddie who is holding a very dirty handkerchief)
- Penelope** Just a minute, *(Cut music)* Yours is a very dirty handkerchief.
- Kiddie** Yours would be, if you'd used it to clean your shoes. *(She races off left)*
(Penelope pushing button business. Enter Muddles right when audience yells as Penelope jumps away left)
- Penelope** You're late for school.
- Muddles** Well it's alright. You're open all day.
- Penelope** You should have been here five minutes since.
- Muddles** Why – what happened? *(Penelope grabs his hand)*
- Penelope** Have you washed your hands?
- Muddles** Yes
- Penelope** When?
- Muddles** November.
- Penelope** Have you a clean pair of shoes?
- Muddles** Yes.
- Penelope** Where?
- Muddles** At home in the wardrobe.
- Penelope** Have you got a clean handkerchief?
- Muddles** Yes. *(Proudly shows immaculate white hanky in top blazer pocket)*

Penelope Let me have a look at it. *(She pulls hanky from his top pocket and continues pulling length after length of white material. It is Muddles' shirt she pulls through his top pocket leaving him standing there with no shirt but still with his loose collar and tie on. He opens blazer to fully disclose that he has lost his shirt. She holds out 'hanky' which is revealed as shirt. School bell rings)*

Penelope First bell. Now Muddles – I'm expecting some new pupils today and I want you to wait here outside school and bring them in when they arrive. And just remember – don't stop outside here playing games. Now I must go in – it's sex education first thing this morning – and I don't want to miss anything. *(Rubs hands gives smirk and does little hop, skip and jump as she exits left)*

(Enter robbers right dressed as school boys – they stand for laugh)

Muddles These must be the two new pupils. I'll have a word with them. I don't recognize that blazer. What school's that?

Dan Rodean.

Muddles But Rodean's a girls school.

Dan Oh we are awful.

Des We are an' all.

(School bell rings off left)

Muddles Second bell. Come on over to the far corner of the yard.

Dan Why?

Muddles You can't hear any bells at all there. *(He exits left)*

(Push button business Des. Re-enter Muddles when audience call. Warn Des. Exit Muddles left)

Dan Now remember what the Sheriff said.

Des I know, I know. Look out for the Babes –

Des And at the right time – *(cut throat business)* Oh, we are awful.

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Des We are an' all. *(They exit left following Muddles into school. Enter Marion and Babes right to play-on music. Marion gives them final tidying for school. Music cuts)* (20)

Marion Penelope's inside to welcome you, and I shall be here to meet you when school finishes. Run along now.

(Peter and Pauline exit left to incidental music, shouting goodbyes to Marion. Same music covers Robin's entrance right to witness end of this business. Marion turns to go and sees Robin.) Robin. *(She goes to him and he greets her).* (21)

Robin You three seem to be getting on alright.

Marion They're darlings aren't they?

Robin All the more reason for me to be told how the Sheriff's behaving.

Marion Badly I fear. He's plotting something.

Robin What makes you say that?

Marion I've seen him talking to two rough looking scoundrels. The two of them seem to be following the Babes everywhere.

Robin In that case they'll have me to reckon with.

Marion What will you do?

Robin There's plenty I can do when the time comes. In the meantime keep me informed.

Marion I knew I could rely on you.

Robin I'd do anything for you Marion. Your heart must tell you that.

(Cue for duet Marion and Robin. Reprise of Scene 1 duet mainly for exit purposes) (22)

FADE TO BLACKOUT AT END OF REPRIS

Scene 3

Full set

The Schoolroom (More Boos!)

(Tabs open and lights up at start of opening chorus “Little Red Schoolhouse” Chorus girls and kiddies who sing number first on their own and then do a dance while chorus sing as a backing. After applause play fast incidental music – suggest “Apple for the Teacher” played quickly to cover business in chaotic opening scene. In the schoolroom are the usual forms for pupils both sides, in front of left side is traditional lopsided tip-up form for comics. There are no desks for pupils. Desk and stool for Penelope. Hooks to hang any necessary props. Handbell on desk and slap stick. The wall is decorated with things official and unofficial. Noughts and crosses – ‘Robin Hood is cool’ - ‘Teacher is daft’ – these three are chalked (white paint) on wall blackboard. Other things on wall – Medieval map of the world – straightforward portrait of Sheriff with glasses – beard and moustache added cartoon style – drawing ‘Flower’ – identical drawing alongside ‘Another Flower’, skeleton drawing of a ‘Fish’ – alongside cartoon drawing ‘A Cat’ (licking its lips). The class in uproar, visually and audibly. Penelope enters.)

Penelope *(Ad lib and ringing handbell picked up from desk)* Now come along, come along. *(All quieten and sit.)* Good morning children

All Good morning, teacher.

Penelope We’ll rub these out for s start *(cleans board)* I’ll just hang this up. *(Draws hook on blackboard and hangs up cape, where there is already a hook or nail in the blackboard)* Are you all there?

All Yes teacher. Are you all there?

Penelope Very funny. Now watch it. *(Gripping desk and picking up slapstick with other hand)* You all know what this is for. *(Brings it down onto desk and hits own hand. Hurts herself and grimaces. Looks off stage left)* There you are my dears.
(Babes enter left)

- Penelope** Children, I want you to meet two new scholars, Peter and Pauline. Now make room for them and make them feel at home. Sit over there dears. (*Babes sit right*) Now then stand up all those who are absent. (*No-one stands*) Good, we're all here.
- Kiddie 1** No we're not. There's our Alfie.
- Penelope** What's the matter with him?
- Kiddie 1** He's got bunged up with custard in one ear and jelly in the other.
- Penelope** Yes, but what's the matter with him?
- Kiddie 1** He's a trifle deaf. (*All laugh*)
- Penelope** A trifle deaf. (*To herself*) Give me strength. Anybody else missing?
- Kiddie 2** Our 'Arry.
- Penelope** No, our Harry.
- Kiddie 2** No, not your 'Arry, our 'Arry. I've brought a note from my mum.
- Penelope** Let me look at it. Dear teacher, our Harry hasn't come because he hasn't been but I've given him something to make him go and when he's been he'll come. Signed my mum.
(*Laughter. Penelope loses control of class to cover entrance of Muddles and robbers left, hovering around tip-up form.*)
- Muddles** (*To class*) Morning all.
- Penelope** (*Pointing at him*) You're late again.
- Muddles** I put my trousers on back to front.
- Penelope** Why should that make you late?
- Muddles** Instead of walking to school I've been walking home again. I've brought you two new pupils. (*Indicating robbers*)
- Penelope** New? They look second hand to me. How old are they?
- Dan** I'm five.
- Des** I don't know whether I'm five or three.
- Muddles** What do you know about girls?
- Des** Nothing.
- Muddles** In that case you're three.
- Penelope** You at the end, take your hands out of your pockets. Have you no manners?
- Des** Yes, but I've no braces.
- Penelope** Well, you're late.
- Des** I sprained my ankle.

- Penelope** That's a lame excuse. (*Gives silly laugh. Bangs slapstick on desk*) Sit over there – all three of you. (*They shape to sit on trick form. Audience will expect something to happen but they sit down simultaneously and nothing happens*)
- Penelope** Today we'll begin with arithmetic. What are two and two?
- 1st Chorus** Four.
- Penelope** Good.
- Muddles** Good, it's perfect.
- Penelope** Just watch it. I've taught you all I know and you're still ignorant. Fractions. Now what would I get if I cut a potato into four pieces?
- 2nd Chorus** Quarters.
- Penelope** Correct. Now what would I get if I cut a potato into eight pieces?
- Muddles** Chips.
- Penelope** (*Waving slapstick*) Another word out of you and you'll feel the hand of knowledge on the seat of learning. Now today being Monday –
- Muddles** And the only Monday we shall have this week.
- Penelope** And the only Monday we shall – who said that?
- All** (*All call but only Robbers stand*) Muddles! (*Form tips and Muddles finishes on floor*)
- Penelope** (*Coming centre in front of desk*) Muddles come out here. Bend down. This is going to hurt me more than it will hurt you.
- Muddles** Yes. But not in the same place. (*She slaps him with slapstick. Muddles goes back to place and sits*)
- Penelope** We shall take history. Can anybody name for me two Ancient sports?
- Muddles** Anthony and Cleopatra. (*All laugh*)
- Penelope** Who said that?
- All** (*Robbers standing*) Muddles. (*Muddles falls off form*)
- Penelope** Muddles come out here. (*Slapstick business*) While you're out here just tell the class where the Magna Carta was signed.
- Muddles** At the bottom. (*All class laugh*)
- Penelope** Which reminds me. Muddles, bend over. (*slapstick business. Muddles goes back to place*) Geography. Where's the dead centre of (*local town*).
- Muddles** (*Name of*) Cemetery.
- Penelope** Who said that?

- All** *(Robbers standing)* Muddles. *(Muddles remains as if seated but in crouching position. He grins at fooling them. Robbers sit down again. Muddles relaxes)*
- Penelope** Who?
- All** Muddles. *(Robbers jumping up. Muddles falls off form)*
- Penelope** Muddles come out here. *(Slapstick business. Muddles returns to place – pretends to sit but doesn't because Robbers still standing. Robbers pretend to sit but don't, finally all sit and then robbers immediately stand and Muddles caught again)*
- Muddles** I'm not sitting here. I'm sitting at the other end. Move up. *(Robbers move up and Muddles sits at good end)*
- Penelope** *(Returning to desk)* You two on the form with Muddles. Let's see if you know any poetry.
- Des** I had a hen, it was a cock.
- Muddles** *(To Dan)* I told you he was only three.
- Penelope** *(To Muddles)* Shut up. *(To Des)* Start again.
- Des** I had a hen, it was a cock
I put it in a box
It sat upon a ball of wool
- Muddles** And laid a pair of socks *(All laugh)*
- Penelope** Who said that?
- All** *(Robbers standing)* Muddles! *(Muddles not caught looks pleased)*
- Penelope** Muddles come out here. *(Slapstick business in front of desk. During this robbers move up on form and Muddles forgetting returns and sits on bad end.)*
- Muddles** *(To robbers)* You didn't catch me that time did you?
- Robbers** No. *(Standing up. Muddles caught again and falls)*
- Muddles** We'll turn this form round. *(Does so. He is now on good end)*
- Penelope** Let's have another poem.
- Dan** When an Eskimo girl gets married
She marries a man that's strong
You've got to be strong in Eskimo land
- Muddles** For the nights are six months long *(All laugh)*
- Penelope** Who said that?
- All** Muddles! *(Robbers standing)*
- Muddles** You didn't catch me that time did you?

- Robbers** No.
- Penelope** No, but I'll catch you – come out here. (*Slapstick business during this robbers turn form round. Muddles goes back to place at bad end*)
- Muddles** You haven't moved up this time have you? (*Sits*)
- Robbers** We didn't need to. (*Stand. Muddles caught and falls.*)
- Penelope** Do you know any poems Muddles? – I hope not.
- Muddles** Yes. Ode to the countryside.
- Penelope** Oh, very nice.
- Muddles** There was a young farmer called Burke (*with knowing look*)
- Penelope** Go on! (*Fearing the worst*)
- Muddles** Who pulled up his cart with a jerk
His load of manure was a bit unsecure
And he was up to his eyes in his work.
- Muddles** Who said that – Muddles – Muddles come out here. (*He comes out and bends over*)
- Penelope** You're for it this time. Just a minute. (*Feeling his bottom*) What's this?
(*Pulling out book but not looking at it.*)
- Muddles** It's a book I'm reading.
- Penelope** What's it called.
- Muddles** Under a bridge with Dick and Harry.
- Penelope** I've never heard of that book. Let's have a look. (*She does so*) Unabridged Dictionary.
- Muddles** I thought I was a long time getting to the plot. Miss, can I go to the loo?
- Penelope** No, you can stay behind after school and rinse out paint jars. (*Waving Muddles to place*) Our last topic this morning is bird watching. Can anyone tell me where most birds are found?
- Muddles** Well I've an address here, given to me by a sailor in Portsmouth.
- Penelope** Not that kind of bird.
- Kiddie 3** Miss, most birds are found in Central Africa.
- Penelope** Very good. Central Africa.
- Kiddie 3** (*Reciting*) Central Africa is the breeding ground of the 00! 00! 00! Ah!
Bird.
- Penelope** (*Repeating without thinking*) Central Africa is the breeding ground of the 00!
00! 00! The 00! 00! What bird?

Kiddie 3 The 00! 00! 00! Ah! Bird.

Penelope Is it? Well I didn't know that.

All (*Ad lib*) She didn't know that.

Dan Miss, Miss, (*Hand up business*) The 00! 00! 00! Ah! Bird is a most unusual bird.

Penelope Well I didn't know that.

All (*Ad lib*) She didn't know that.

Muddles (*Standing*) Miss, Miss (*Hand up business*) The 00! 00! 00! Ah! Bird lays square eggs. And that's how it got its name.

Penelope Why

Muddles Everytime it lays an egg it goes –

All (*Rising by stages with pained expression*) 00! 00! 00! (*All subside back on to seat with relief on word*) Ah! (*On laugh orchestra strike up reprise (25) of opening chaos number. Penelope throws things at class and they throw things back and the scene finishes in musical chaos*)

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACKOUT AND TABS CLOSE

Scene 4

Tabs

On the Way Back from School (Hurray!)*(Play on. Enter Dan and Des left)* (26)

Dan Look, we were told to *(Notices push-button)* Just a minute – I’m going to push this button. *(Push button down right. Enter Muddles left when audience call. Exit Muddles right)*

Dan We were told to follow the Babes everywhere and we’ve lost them, why did you have to stop and tie your shoe-lace?

Des It was undone. Where will the Babes be now?

Dan They’ll be in the line up waiting to go home.

Des Let’s give them a shout. See if they’ll come.

Dan Not a hope.

Des I have an idea in my head.

Dan There’s plenty of room for it there.

Des I’ve a bag full of lollipops here. Let’s shout out that we’re giving them away free.

Dan What a good idea. I’m glad I thought of it.

Both *(Brandishing large flat glistening lollipops)* Lollipops, free lollipops. *(Enter Kiddies shouting excitedly. Robbers dish out lollipops. They all stand in line licking them)*

Dan Well that’s marvellous, but the two we want haven’t come. Where are they?

1st Kiddie If you’re wanting the Babes they’re back at the castle.

Dan Thank goodness for that. At least we know they’re safely in danger. Come on.

Des Not until I’ve finished my lollipop.

Dan I didn’t know there were two for us. I love lollipops.

Des So do I.

Kiddies So do we.

(Number – Robbers and Kiddies “I Love Lollipops”. Exit right) (27)
at end of number. Enter Sheriff left. He paces up and down angrily with black cash bag under arm. Stops and opens it, and quickly scrabbles amongst the coins and slams the bag shut).

Sheriff A curse on the outlaw Robin Hood. Once more I find myself short of cash. I must have more money. Now is the time for action. The Babes must be disposed of. Their fortune shall be mine. Where are those two fools I hired to

do my dirty work for me. FOOLS! FOOLS! FOOLS! (*Enter Dan and Des to silly short dance step to drum acc.*)

- Robbers** You called?
- Sheriff** Where have you been?
- Des** Coming
- Sheriff** Did you follow the Babes everywhere?
- Dan** We even had to follow them into school. School! As if my ignorance could be improved on.
- Sheriff** Well? (*Loudly and dramatically*)
- Des** yes thanks, apart from a touch of bronchitis.
- Sheriff** Tonight's the night.
- Dan** What night?
- Des** My bath night.
- Sheriff** (*Getting carried away*) Tonight. When all is dark and still and the town slumbers. Then is the time for you to do your dirty work.
- Des** It's a good job it is my bathnight.
- Sheriff** Steal into the Babes bedroom, whisk them away from the loving care of their nurse – take them to the forest and then – (*cut throat business*) polish them off.
- Dan** (*Cut throat business enthusiastically*)
- Des** (*Doubtfully*) Polish them off?
- Sheriff** No suspicion must fall on me. This kidnapping must appear to be an outside job.
- Dan** If we're outside the castle, how will we know which is the Babes' room?
- Des** And how will we get up there?
- Sheriff** Hanging from the bedroom window you will find a rope. Thus there will be no mistake and the climb will be easy. And always remember –
- Des** The fifth of November.
- Sheriff** Don't dare to return 'till the deed is done.
- Des** We shall not return 'till the deed is diddled.
- Dan** We shall not return 'till the diddle is doddled.
- Des** And the cash?
- Sheriff** It'll be here waiting for you.
- Dan** Oh, we are awful.
- All** Oh, we are an all.

(Number Sheriff, Dan and Des “Dirty Work”)

(28)

FADE TO BLACKOUT AT END OF NUMBER

Scene 5

Full Set

Nottingham Castle – The Babes’ Nursery

(The set contains two small beds for Babes with a separating chair and a practical window left. There are almost life size toys near to a large toy cupboard right. There is a safe on stage left.)

(Tabs open and lights up as opening music starts. Lullaby/nursery type. Penelope is discovered on stage getting nursery ready.) (29)

Penelope This nursery will just do for the Babes. It’s comfortable and safe. What hasn’t come from Mothercare has come from Securicor. *(Music has faded now)* I’ll just straighten these covers and then I’ve done everything. Muddles doesn’t seem to be anywhere about. I’ll just try this push button.

Audience Muddles! *(Enter Muddles left)*

Muddles Leave that button along. *(To Aud.)* Thanks kids.

Penelope It’s bedtime. Why aren’t you ready for bed?

Muddles I am ready for bed. *(Pulls his shirt out of his trousers. It is a nightshirt which goes nearly to the floor. Enter Marion right with Babes. Babes are in night clothes)*

Marion Now come along children. It’s high time you were in bed.

Pauline I don’t want to go to bed.

Peter What about our bedtime story?

Marion What bedtime story?

Pauline The one Penelope was going to tell us.

Marion Oh, very well then. I’ll leave them with you Penelope. Goodnight children.

Babes Goodnight Marion. *(Marion exits right)*

Penelope Come along. Time everybody was in bed.

Muddles Why do we all have to go to bed so early?

Penelope I need my beauty sleep.

Pauline Does sleep make you beautiful?

Penelope Of course it does.

Muddles You must have been lying awake a lot.

Penelope Don’t be cheeky. Men say I’ve got everything a man needs.

Muddles You have, muscles, hairy chest and a moustache.

Penelope I’ve got a figure like an egg-timer.

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- Peter** Yes, all the sands gone to the bottom.
- Penelope** Enough of your cheek. It's time to go to dreamland.
- Pauline** I had a dream last night. I dreamt I was eating a giant marshmallow and when I woke up half the pillow was gone.
- Peter** Well I dreamt I was eating Shredded Wheat and when I woke up half the mattress had gone.
- Muddles** That's nothing. I dreamt I was in bed with a horse and when I woke up, I was.
- Penelope** Really?
- Muddles** Yes, it was a night-mare.
- Penelope** Look, we've got to clean our teeth. Muddles get the toiletries.
- Muddles** Eh?
- Penelope** The stuff (*Muddles now understands and exits right*)
- Pauline** If I go to bed early I always wake up with a pain.
- Penelope** Where is the pain? (*Leaning over Pauline solicitously*)
- Pauline** Six inches above my head.
- Penelope** (*Realising she has fallen for it*) I'll give you a pill that will cure it.
- Pauline** When should I take it?
- Penelope** Half an hour before you wake up.
- (Enter Muddles. He is holding a very large toothbrush and a glass of water. He also has his mouth full of water. Muddles and two Babes stand in a line. He gives toothbrush to girl, glass of water to boy. Girl brushes her teeth, boy takes a mouthful of water and gargles and Muddles spits out water in his mouth. If necessary Muddles can carry things on in a bowl and spit into bowl)*
- Penelope** Muddles collect those things and off you go to bed.
- Muddles** Righto. (*He collects brush and glass and moves to exit right*). Pyjamas, Pyjamas.
- Penelope** Pardon?
- Muddles** Nightie, nightie. (*He exits right*)
- Penelope** (*To Babes*) Right. Into bed. (*They get into beds*)
- Peter** Don't forget our bedtime story.
- Penelope** Well are you both comfortable? (*She sits between them*)
- Babes** (*In chorus*) Yes
- Penelope** Then we'll begin. Once upon a time –
- Peter** When was that?

- Penelope** It was once – upon a time.
- Pauline** Once upon a time – was that before or after long, long ago?
- Penelope** Both. Once upon a time – (*Preventing any attempted interruption*) soon after “long, long ago”, (*preventing any attempted interruption*) but shortly before “just recently” there lived a King.
- Peter** Was it Edward the Confessor?
- Penelope** No, it had nothing to do with the French Revolution.
- Pauline** Where did he live?
- Penelope** He lived in – how do I know where he lived?
- Peter** Well you’re telling the story.
- Penelope** I am when I get the chance. Now this King –
- Pauline** Where was he crowned?
- Penelope** On his head. Same as you will be in a minute. Now this King – (*Peter opens mouth to interrupt and Penelope closes it*) – had one wish. He wished that everything he touched would turn to –
- Pauline** Sticks of Liquorish.
- Penelope** Sticks of liquor – sticks of liquorish? What could he do with a stick of liquorish? (*Realises what she has said*) – don’t answer that.
- Peter** (*Slight pause*) Suck it and see.
- Penelope** Now be quiet or I won’t finish the story. The King wished that everything he touched would turn to gold. His wish was granted. He touched his shoes – they turned to gold. He touched his clothes, they turned to gold... He touched his furniture and that turned to gold. Everything he touched turned to gold.
- Pauline** Oh, how lovely.
- Penelope** Ah, but wait a minute. He touched his Rice Krispies and they turned to gold.
- Babes** (*Awed*) Ooh!
- Penelope** He touched his J20 and that turned to gold. Even his fish fingers turned to gold. Just think, nothing to eat and drink. (*Babes carried away nod numbly*) But the worst thing of all was when he kissed his little daughter and she turned into a golden statue. (*Babes draw in breath and put hands to mouths. They are upset*)
- Pauline** Whatever did he do then?

- Penelope** He realised he's been greedy and was very sorry. So he wished ever so hard that everything could be just as it was before. And when he'd wished hard enough a good fairy came along and granted him his wish.
- Peter** (*Earnestly*) Oh, Penelope, I am glad.
- Pauline** If that good fairy hadn't helped him it would have served his right for being so greedy.
- Penelope** Yes. Just you remember that and you won't go far wrong.
- Babes** We'll remember. (*They settle down*)
- Penelope** Goodnight children. Eh, don't they look lovely when they're asleep – I wonder if I do. I'll go and ask Muddles. (*She tiptoes out right. As lights dim, crisp dream-like music starts Toy dance number, involving Kiddies as* (30)
different easily identifiable toys, i.e. Paddington Bear, Sailor Boy, Wood Soldier, Dutch Doll, Jack-in-a-Box, Panda, Fairy, Action Man, Barbie Doll, Puppet on Strings, Womble etc. These come out of toy cupboard. At end of number, one toy knocks article of furniture over or drops linen chest lid, all toys scramble back into cupboard except Paddington who is shut out briefly. Paddington hammers on cupboard door which opens. He is whisked in as music finishes. Misterioso music. Enter Sheriff left.) (31)
- Sheriff** (*In loud whisper*) Who's there? Methought I heard a noise. And yet there can be no one there. (*Flourishing rope*) How easy it would be to finish the job now. But no, I must deny myself that pleasure. To the task in hand (*crosses to window and fastens rope with audible effort*) – now to lower it down the castle wall. (*Pays out rope*) – (*To sleeping Babes*) And now my dears, dream your last dreams. Shortly you will have two visitors. With them you shall journey forth into the dark night – never to return. Goodnight my pretties. (*He exits left*) (*Misterioso music continues louder for Sheriff's exit and then quietens for robbers' voices off. Torch flashes from side to side off left. Dan enters as if after rope climb through window. Flashes torch round then turns to window*)
- Dan** All clear! (*Similarly Des appears framed in window crouching on window sill*)
Well don't just stand there. Jump.
- Des** I've only just climbed up.
- Dan** Not back down there. Down here.
- Des** I can't.

- Dan** Why not?
- Des** I feel dizzie. (*Sound of knocking is heard*)
- Dan** Shh! What's that?
- Des** Mice with clogs on. (*Knocking continues*)
- Dan** (*Pointing to Des's knees*) It's you you fool. Your knees are knocking.
- Des** Well I always knock before I come into a room.
- Dan** For the last time, jump in.
- Des** How can I jump with this bag of tools? (*In satchel round his neck*)
- Dan** Pass me the tools. (*Des drops them on the floor with a loud bang. Bus. shushing. Dan turns to see if Babes have awakened*) You nearly woke the sleeping beauties. Now come on. We might as well burgle the safe while we are here. (*Des jumps in and lands on Dan's foot*) Idiot. Pick up the tools. (*Des picks up bag of tools and swings them over shoulder and catches Des in back as he is examining safe left*). Fool. Now listen. We're going to make this a nice quiet job. Right?
- Robbers** Sshh! (*Both suddenly attack safe, banging and manhandling it and making as much noise as possible, but very briefly*).
- Dan** We'll never get into this safe. This lock has me beat.
(*Penelope's voice is heard singing off stage right*)
- Des** Sshh! There's somebody coming. (*Both hide up stage left*)
(*Penelope enters in night attire, crosses left and opens safe merely by pulling door open, takes out bottle of stout and exits right. Dan crosses and peers in safe*)
- Dan** Not a sausage in there now.
- Des** I don't like sausages anyway.
- Dan** Quiet. Let's get out of here quick. But we mustn't forget who we came for.
(*To mysterious music they tiptoe to beds. Des next to Pauline and Dan (32) next to Peter. Incidental music stops*)
- Robbers** Wakey, wakey! (*Babes wake up but before they can scream each robber places hand over mouth*)
- Dan** Not a sound my dears. Do exactly as I say and you won't get hurt – (*Aside*)
Yet. We're going for a long, long walk.
- Des** Can I come?
- Dan** Yer – (*reacts*)

- Peter** You can go instead of me if you like. Who wants to go for a walk in the middle of the night?
- Dan** You're coming for a walk whether you like it or not. (*Pauline suddenly bites Des's finger*)
- Des** Oww!!! She's bit me fingers. They're gone, where's my fingers. (*Two fingers folded down as if missing, finally picks up two fingers from floor in mime and replaces them to sound effect. Pauline laughs.*)
- Pauline** Oh, you do make me laugh. Come on Peter it might be fun.
- Dan** I should say so. A midnight hike.
- Peter** (*Excited*) A kind of adventure. All right then and we won't tell anyone in the castle where we are going.
- Dan** A good idea.
- Des** I sometimes get good ideas.
- Dan** Well I've got one for you. Shut up.
- Pauline** If you wait a minute, we'll get dressed.
- Dan** No time to wait. You don't want to be discovered do you? Give Des your outdoor clothes and follow me. (*She does so*)
- Peter** (*Pointing to door*) This is the way out. Why are we going that way? (*Indicating window*)
- Dan** People don't have adventures by walking through doors. You climb through windows and down ropes. You first Desmond and then if the children fall they fall on you.
- Des** What do I fall on?
- Dan** The ground.
- Des** I don't want to go first. I get dizzy. I've got vertigo.
- Dan** You've got no further to go than anyone else.
- Des** Ehh?
- Dan** Oh, get on with it. (*Pushes Des out through window to disappear "down rope". To Babes*) Now you, my dears. (*Helps Babes through window and follows himself "down rope". Finally just his head and shoulders can be seen*)
Ooooh! We are awful!
- Des** (*Voice is heard supposedly from below, outside castle wall, echo effect*) We are an' all.
- Dan** He – he – he – he (*Fiendish laugh*)

FADE TO BLACKOUT

(Play bridge music to next scene as tabs close)

(33)

Scene 6

Tabs

A Glade in Sherwood Forest

(When tabs are closed, lights up. Enter Robin, Little John and Friar Tuck right)

Robin *(Troubled)* I tell you John, I'm worried. No word from Marion about the Babes.

Friar They say no news is good news, my son.

John Marion promised to let you know if there was any trouble and Marion wouldn't break a promise.

Robin I know that, but is Marion alright? The Sheriff appears to be making no move and this is unlike him.

Friar And you appear to be troubled and that's unlike you.

Robin Maybe it was a mistake to leave the Babes in the castle to the tender mercies of the Sheriff. Have I gambled unnecessarily with the lives of two innocent children. *(Enter Merry Men left)* Any news? Will, you were watching the castle. Did you see anything?

Will No Robin – everything seems quiet – we've seen no movement.

Robin I must see no harm befalls the Babes and Marion.

Friar I don't like this waiting – doing nothing.

John We're all ready for some action.

Robin You're right. From first light we'll renew our watch on the castle and when opportunity presents itself, remove the Babes from the Sheriff's clutches. So it's back to our hideout, men and prepare for our toughest fight yet. Are you with me?

All Aye.

(Number Robin and Merry Men. "Stout Hearted Men" type) (34)

FADE TO BLACKOUT AT END OF NUMBER

Scene 7

Full Set

Deep in the Forest

(Mood music, as tabs open a mixture of 'plaintive' for Babes and (35) misterioso for robbers. Enter Dan on misterioso bar. Exaggerated business making sure they are unobserved – Dan beckons on others. Enter left with Babes holding hands. The Babes look tired and dispirited and cross right of centre to sink to the ground. Babes quietly go into huddle with Peter comforting Pauline. During ensuing dialogue they settle down and go to sleep)

- Peter** Oh, I'm so tired. Why did we have to come such a long walk?
- Des** *(Sinking to the ground left of centre)* I'm beginning to wonder that myself.
- Dan** In that case I'll remind you. *(Pulls him up and "nuts" him)* On your feet.
- Des** I've got no feet left. These are just odd bits of leg turned up at the bottom.
- Dan** *(Suddenly and dramatically)* Time to kill!
- Des** Then let's have a game of cards.
- Dan** It's time to do the Dirty Deed. *(Emphatically)*
- Des** *(Panicking)* I don't feel like deeding a dirty do.
- Dan** You seem to forget. We are awful!
- Des** We are an' all – *(audibly swallow)* I think.
- Dan** What do you mean – you think? Which method of – *(Cut throat bus.)* do you prefer?
- Des** *(Hopefully suggesting the impossible because he doesn't want to do the job)*
How about drowning them?
- Dan** Drowning them he says, without a drop of water for miles around. Think again my wet friend.
- Des** Let's not bother killing them at all.
- Dan** You cowardy, cowardy custard. What about the money? What about the Sheriff?
- Des** What about going home?
- Dan** *(Shaking him)* Pull yourself together. *(Des does so visibly, pulling in limbs to drum effect)*
- Des** I'm losing my nerve.
- Dan** You'll lose your teeth in a minute. Think again.
- Des** We could hang them but we haven't got a rope.

- Dan** (*Producing rope*) We have a rope. So we hang them.
- Des** No, don't let's hang them, we might need that for a clothes line. We could poison them –
- Dan** (*Interrupting*) But I haven't got any poison –
- Des** I have. 'Cos I am awful really.
- Dan** Let's have a look. (*Des gives Dan bottle. Dan triumphantly holding bottle of dark liquid aloft*) Ha – Ha – Ha – (*Looks closely at bottle*) Wait a minute – Pepsi. (*Hands Des it back*). We've no more time. (*Produces two knives*) These are what we'll use. Sharpen that. (*Hands Des knife. Dan begins to sharpen his on sole of boot. Des gingerly tests his blade with thumb, gasps and sucks thumb*).
- Des** Why did you have to give me the one from Gillette. It's sharp enough for me.
- Dan** If it's sharp enough for you, it's sharp enough for the little darlings. Go and see what they're doing. (*Des crosses right of centre to Babes, looks at them. They sigh and stir in their sleep slightly, Des returns to Dan*).
- Des** They're a by-byes.
- Dan** So much the better. The hour has come. After you Desmond. (*Des crosses, raises knife, audibly works himself up and then breaks down in tears with Stan Laurel unintelligible comment*)
- Dan** (*As orchestra strike a build-up music*) You've got no killer instinct. (36)
I shall have to do the dirty deed myself. (*Music builds as he crosses and raises knife. Music breaks. Dan does Stan Laurel 'cry' even louder than Des. Orch. Brass 'laugh' "wow – wow – wow". Both robbers cry – both blow noses. Des's hankie has a big hole in after he has blown his nose*).
- Dan** What are we going to tell the Sheriff?
- Des** Let's pretend we did kill the Babes. He'll never know any different. Come on, let's get out of this rotten forest. (*They cross to exit left*)
- Dan** It's the first good turn we've done for years. But let it be clearly understood.
We're still awful. (*Exit and play off*) (37)
- (*Fairy music. Enter Fairy right and circles Babes as she speaks*) (38)
- Fairy** Once more the hand of evil has been stayed.
Though villains try to ply their wicked trade.
But meanwhile both the Babes sleep, refuge find
And leave their worldly cares and troubles far behind.

Ere this adventure more trouble they will meet.
But faith and courage reign, the villains they'll defeat.
Come forest birds, protect the Babes this night.
Leaves from the tree shall cover them 'till morning light.

*(Exit Fairy right as chorus or kiddies enter left as birds for ballet (39)
sequence. Re-enter Fairy for final tableaux completing the work of kiddies as
birds putting large leaves on Babes. Snow falls gently on Babes as curtain
falls. Use Fairy in ballet if possible and as necessary)*

Curtain

Interval

Entracte (40)

Scene 8 Full Set

Robin Hood's Hideout in the Heart of Sherwood Forest

(Boisterous opening number by Robin and Merry Men – full chorus excluding kiddies. This is the only time everyone appears as Merry Men, in order to give an impression of strength in numbers. Chorus convey effect of flexing their muscles before the fight by staging various wrestling bouts in small groups, feats of strength and other by-play. Swords may possibly be used for fencing. At end of number all raise fist and cheer.) (41)

Robin Well sung, men. With voice good and strong, and hearts loyal and true, we'll never want for courage and comrade-ship when danger threatens.

All *(Ad lib)* Aye- Well said Robin – 'Tis true.

Robin My concern is for the two orphan Babes. *(Men suddenly attentive)*. It is no longer safe to leave them in the company of the Sheriff. Here is my plan –

Alan *(Looking off)* Robin.

Robin What is it?

Alan Someone approaches. 'Tis Maid Marion. *(All ad lib to each other expressing pleasure mingled with surprise)* 'Tis Marion. *(Enter Marion)*

Marion Robin *(Runs to Robin and they embrace)* I bring terrible news.

Robin Tell me.

Marion The two Babes have vanished.

Several Men Vanished!

Marion They've been missing since early this morning. The Sheriff refuses to take the matter seriously.

Robin He's covering his tracks. The Babes have been kidnapped I'll be bound and the Sheriff must be involved in the plot.

Marion I can't help suspecting those two evil men that have been following the Babes around.

Robin Of course – who else – with the Sheriff behind the whole wicked plan. They're bound to seek cover in the forest, so we still have a chance. We must find them before it's too late.

Marion *(Almost sobbing and holding on to Robin)* Oh, Robin.

Robin Courage. Friar, look after Marion. *(Marion goes to Friar. He leads her away a little but not off. Robin turns to men)* Alan-a-Dale, take a party and cover

the ground between here and the river. (*Alan and a group of men exit left.*)
 Will, you take the path leading to the high road. (*Will and group of men exit right*) Little John, search the area around the major oak. (*Little John and men exit right*) The rest of you – come with me. (*Robin exits left with remaining Merry Men*).

Marion Oh, Friar, what are we to do?

Friar (*Trying to cheer her up*) Do? I know what I shall do. What I always do in time of trouble (*He laughs*) Eat. (*Indicating exit right*). After you, my lady (*she exits right*) But before we do, I'm just going to press this button over here. (*Crosses left*)

Audience Muddles. (*Enter Muddles left*)

Muddles You're not to push that button. Thanks, kids. (*Noise of someone approaching heard off stage left*)

Friar Who goes there? Friend of foe.

Penelope (*Offstage left*) Yes.

Muddles What do you mean 'Yes'. How can you be both? (*Penelope enters left. She carries bag with cricket tackle in*).

Penelope Just like a man, leaving me to carry this bag.

Muddles Are you tired?

Penelope Of course, I'm tired. You promised me you'd carry this bag and you know what happens to people who don't keep their promises?

Muddles No. What?

Penelope They become Town Councillors.

Friar My comical friends, welcome to Robin Hood's secret hide-out.

Muddles Secret! You've had that now she knows.

Penelope How do you mean?

Muddles (*To Friar*) You know what they call her? Gas Bag Gertie. It'll be all over Nottingham in half an hour.

Penelope Don't worry Friar. It's strictly between these four walls.

Muddles You're in a forest.

Friar I'm taking no chances. You must swear the oath of secrecy and allegiance. (*He stands between the two as if taking a ceremony*) Repeat after me. I swear

–

Penelope I swear

- Muddles** But not on Sundays (*Penelope gives Muddles a withering look*)
- Friar** I swear I will, at all times respect, the Motto.
- Muddles** I swear that I will –
- Penelope** At all times respect –
- Muddles** The Grotto.
- Friar** The Motto!!
- Penelope** (*Pause*) Ditto.
- Friar** The motto says –
- Muddles and**
- Penelope** The motto says –
- Friar** That you never should –
- Muddles and**
- Penelope** (*Clapping pat-a-cake*) Play with the Gypsies in the wood.
- Friar** Nothing of the kind. Penelope – raise your right hand.
- Penelope** (*Doing so*) I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth –
- Friar** Penelope (*cutting in*) Don't you know what it means to put up your hand like that?
- Penelope** I ought to. I've been a school teacher for twenty years. (*Hunting horn* (42) *sounds from off stage left and is answered from off stage right. From several directions Merry Men enter – group severally. Ad lib dialogue – “Success” “Robin has found the Babes” “Good old Robin”. “He’s got the eyes of a hawk” etc. All this heard above general Hub-bub*)
- Marion** (*Enter right*) What's happened? Have the Babes been found?
- Merry Men** Aye! (*All cheer. Enter Robin left and Babes hand in hand followed by some Merry Men. Babes dash across stage into arms of Marion and Penelope. Robin pauses for a moment then stands left of centre to be congratulated by men*).
- Marion** (*Rushing to embrace him*) Oh, Robin, you've found them. Thank goodness they're safe and sound.
- Robin** Providence looked after them and they're little the worse for their adventure.
- Peter** Those two men took us for a walk in the forest.
- Pauline** And then they left us all alone.
- Penelope** (*In charge of them*) Well thank goodness you're not hurt.
- Marion** Robin – what are we to do?

- Robin** First of all the Babes must stay here – that’s certain. Safety lies here in the greenwood.
- Marion** In that case I’m staying here too.
- Muddles** I’m in no hurry to go back myself.
- Robin** First we’ll have a celebration. Friar see to the venison and set a banquet. (*Exit Friar with quite a few Merry Men as helpers*).
- Penelope** Come on. (*To Babes*) You can’t sit down to a banquet until I’ve wiped your hands and face with a flannel. (*Penelope produces toilet bag and cleans up Babes*) Come on Muddles, you as well.
- Muddles** Not on your life. She spits on her flannel and it all smells of Guinness. (*Merry Men laugh. Little John enters left. Penelope remonstrates with Muddles and they mime argument.*)
- Robin** Feasting shall be the order of the day. Away men and enjoy yourselves. (*Men cheer, shout, laugh and exit left and right. Marion exits last hand in hand with Robin and off right*).
- Pauline** I think I’ll press this button over here.
- Audience** Muddles.
- Muddles** Just you leave that button alone. You haven’t to press that button. Thanks Kids. (*To audience.*)
(*Peter has opened bag which Penelope brought on and placed left*)
- Peter** Oh, look, cricket tackle. (*Take bat, ball and wickets which are in a fixed base, from bag*).
- Pauline** Oh, good, let’s have a game.
- Muddles** Eh, put that down. It’s mine. I bought it new.
- Peter** When? (*Holding up the tackle*)
- Muddles** 1983.
- Babes** Let’s have a game of cricket.
- Muddles** No. (*Taking tackle from Peter*) It’s my bat, it’s my ball and they’re my wickets and you’re not playing.
- Peter** Oh, come on, Muddles. Be a sport.
- Muddles** Go on, alright. What about you Penelope?
- Penelope** Me? I don’t think so. I play a perfectly shocking game.
- Muddles** So do I, but let’s play cricket first.
- Penelope** Go on then, but I want to bat.

- Muddles** You can't. I'm batting.
- Penelope** Why?
- Muddles** 'Cos it's my bat and it's my ball and they're my wickets. (*Muddles keeps bat. Penelope takes ball, Babes stump and field. Penelope bowls, Muddles misses. Stumper catches ball and kicks wicket over*)
- All** Howzat.
- Muddles** Not out.
- Penelope** Why not?
- Muddles** 'Cos it's my bat and it's my ball and they're my wickets
- Penelope** We'll give him another chance. (*Penelope bowls and hits Muddles in the stomach*)
- All** Howzat?
- Penelope** L.B.W.
- Muddles** It hit me in my stomach. How can it be L.B.W?
- Penelope** Large belly before wicket.
- Muddles** It wasn't out was it? (*Appeals to audience. Business. Oh no it wasn't – Oh yes it was*) Alright then, but I'm going to bowl.
- Pauline** Why?
- Muddles** 'Cos it's my bat and it's my ball and they're my wickets. (*Muddles bowls. Peter bats and Pauline stumps. Muddles bowls. Peter hits own wicket with bat*).
- Muddles** Howzat?
- All** Not out.
- Muddles** It was. (*Muddles appeals to audience. Oh, yes it was. Oh no it wasn't*) Alright then, but I'm going to stump.
- Peter** Why?
- Muddles** 'Cos it's my bat and it's my ball and they're my wickets. (*Penelope keeps ball, Peter bats, Muddles stumps. Penelope bowls, Peter advances down wicket and misses. Muddles catches ball and stumps him*)
- Muddles** Howzat?
- All** Not out.
- Muddles** It was. (*Appeals to audience. Oh, yes it was – Oh, no it wasn't*) Aw, come on, let's get on with the game.

- Penelope** No, I'm fed up. I'm not playing any more. (*Throws wickets off stage left. Yell heard off stage from Little John*)
- Muddles** Hey! Those are my wickets.
- Peter** I'm fed up. I'm not playing. (*Throws bat off stage left. Yell is heard again*)
- Muddles** Hey! That's my bat.
- Pauline** (*Takes ball from Muddles*) I'm fed up and I'm not playing. (*Throws ball off stage. Bigger yell is heard*).
- Muddles** Hey! That's my ball.
(*Enter Little John with two Merry Men. Little John carries bat, ball and wickets*).
- John** Who's throwing things?
- Penelope** Not me.
- Pauline** Not me.
- Peter** Not me.
- John** Well who is?
- Penelope** Him. (*Pointing to Muddles*)
- Muddles** Why me?
- Peter** 'Cos it's your bat. (*Takes bat from John and gives it to Muddles*).
- Pauline** And it's your ball. (*Takes ball from John and gives to Muddles*)
- Penelope** And they're his wickets. (*Takes wickets from John and gives to Muddles. Peter, Pauline and Penelope laugh and exit right*).
- John** (*Picking up bag*) And I suppose this is your bag?
- Muddles** Yes it is. Give us it back.
- John** With pleasure. (*Puts it over Muddles' head. Two Merry Men lift Muddles up and carry him off left laughing at him. John follows them off, also laughing*).
(*Play on. Enter Robin and Marion right*) (43)
- Robin** My Lady Marion, a word in your ear.
- Marion** But Master Robin, the banquet. Our presence is requested.
- Robin** Your presence is requested here. Oh, Marion we seem to see each other for but a few fleeting moments.
- Marion** 'Tis so, that's why our moments together are so precious to both of us.
- Robin** And yet I have so much to tell you.
(*Cue for duet. Marion and Robin*) (44)

END OF NUMBER FADE TO BLACKOUT AND TABS CLOSE

Scene 9

Tabs

A Corridor in the Castle

(Sheriff is discovered on stage pacing up and down).

Sheriff News. I must have news. Where's Muddles that mess of a Messenger – Missing. Where's the governess to the Babes? – Missing! And where is the fair Marion? – Nowhere to be found. All three disappear as soon as the Babes are known to be kidnapped – All three in league against me. As for Maid Marion, no doubt she has run to her friend Robin Hood. A liaison I have suspected for some time. All this matters not, once I receive the news I hunger for – the death of the Babes! *(Laughs)* Where are those two wooden headed, dim witted, rascallions. *(During this, robbers' heads are seen round corner of pros. Arch – one above the other at normal height. They disappear when Sheriff turns towards them)* They should be here. *(He turns away)* I tell them to report at the earliest possible opportunity and where are they? – certainly not here. The fools. Why am I always to be plagued by bungling, incompetent, addle-pated idiots. *(During this he crosses to side where robbers were)* Where are they? *(Heads appear in same position as before but at opposite side of stage).*

Robbers We're here.

Sheriff Where have you been?

Robbers Coming.,

Sheriff And is your mission accomplished?

Dan Well we've got back.

Sheriff And is everything *(twitching face)* satisfactory?

Des I think so. I've a blister on my foot but –

Sheriff *(Cutting in, losing temper)* Fool! I refer to the business in hand. What did you do in the forest?

Des Get lost.

Sheriff *(Clutching him by the throat)* Don't you tell me to get lost.

Dan He's not telling you to get lost. We got lost.

Sheriff Did you take the lives of the two children?

Dan Yes.

Des No. *(Fractionally later. Dan nudges him)* Yes.

Sheriff *(Beginning to suspect)* How exactly did you dispose of them?

Dan Knives.

Des Drowning. (*Fractionally later. Dan nudges him. They look at each other.*)

Robbers We poisoned them.

Sheriff You lie – both of you. I thought you were a pair of thoroughly trustworthy criminals. I give you a job and you bungle it. What did happen?

Dan Yes, what did happen?

Des We bungled it.

Sheriff So the Babes still live. And the whole of county will know of this attempt on their lives. Where are they? Who will they be speaking to? What will they be saying? They must be silenced. They are too dangerous to live. Their very existence threatens me, (*Robbers smile*) – and you (*Robbers smile fades*) They must be eliminated. Who (*pause to look at Robbers pointedly*) will do the job?

Des Not us.

Dan What about you?

Sheriff We're all in this together.

Des Sink or swim?

Dan Muck or nettles?

Sheriff Do or die! (*Meaning look at Robbers*) – Together we shall search the forest. If necessary we shall separate. I'll separate from you, you'll separate from me and if we don't find them dead or alive, I'll separate you both from your breath. Remember your motto – Oooo! We are awful.

Robbers (*By now enthusiastic*) We are an all.

Sheriff (*Over intro*) To the forest - (45)
 (*Reprise – "Dirty Work" number Sheriff and Robbers*)

FADE TO BLACKOUT AT END OF REPRISSE AND TABS OPEN AS
 MUSIC NO. 46 BEGINS

Scene 10 ¾ set if possible to allow for Scene 11 to be set.)

Near Cuckoo Farm Otherwise keep tabs closed and play in front of tabs)

(Opening number Kiddies as hikers. They exit at end of number) (46)

(Hiking play on. Reprise of Kiddies number for entrance of (47)

Muddles and Penelope. Muddles is wearing short Oxford bags, white open necked old fashioned short sleeved sports shirt with wide sleeves, sleeveless Fair-Isle pullover, tight knotted handkerchief on head, boots, one tan brown and one black. He is carrying a haversack. Penelope is wearing a mini kilt, a tight mustard coloured roll necked jumper, green socks and sandals. Walk round stage in time to music. After several circuits, music finishes.)

Muddles I like that jumper.

Penelope Yes, it is very nice.

Muddles You remember that time I borrowed it for a fancy dress ball?

Penelope Did you?

Muddles Yes. I put it on back to front and won first prize as a camel.

Penelope I nearly put my battleship dress on.

Muddles What's a battleship dress?

Penelope Top decks cleared for action (*Adjusts her bra*). But I've been very patriotic. I've put my Union Jack knickers on. (*Lifts skirt to show them*)

Muddles Aren't they uncomfortable?

Penelope Not since I took the flag-pole out. I must say you look a mess. Look at those boots. One brown and one black.

Muddles I've got another pair like this at home. What are you carrying that hat for? Why aren't you wearing it?

Penelope This is a very special hat. It's a magic hat. (*Produces soft shabby hat*).

Muddles That old thing. Get away.

Penelope It helps you to sleep well. If it's noisy outside you won't hear a thing if you wear this hat.

Muddles So you get a good night's sleep. Where did you get this magic hat?

Penelope This was given to me by an old Fakir.

Muddles Paul Daniels?

Penelope Yes – no.

Muddles I could do with a good night's sleep. Will it work if I put it on?

- Penelope** Try it. If you put this hat on I can guarantee you won't hear anything I say to you.
- Muddles** I'm all ears.
- Penelope** I'd noticed that. It's ever so magic. I'll show you. (*During the following Penelope is placing hat on and off Muddles' head*) I lent it to a lady who was having -----(*Put hat on. Mime words for a few seconds. Take hat off*) --- even if she closed the window and drew the curtains (*Hat on. Mime a few seconds. Hat off*) -----with red stripes -----downstairs in nothing but her dressing gown. (*Hat on. Mime. Hat off*) -----25 pence (*Hat on. Mime. Hat off*) -----and the policeman fainted. Now did you hear anything I said when you had the hat on?
- Muddles** Not a word. If I wore that in bed I wouldn't hear any noise in the street. Can I buy it?
- Penelope** Yes, if you want.
- Muddles** How much?
- Penelope** Twenty pounds.
- Muddles** Well it's my last twenty pounds, but it will be worth it. Here you are. (*He gives Penelope money and puts hat on*)
- Penelope** I'm sure you'll be satisfied. You'll get a good night's sleep and ---- (*She realises she has spoken while Muddles is wearing hat*) Oh heck.
- Muddles** I heard every word you said. It isn't a magic hat at all. I've been conned. I want my money back. It's a fake.
- Penelope** Well I told you I got it from a fakir.
- Muddles** I want my money back.
- Penelope** I'm not giving you your money back, but I'll help you sell the hat and make a profit.
- Muddles** Who'd be daft enough to fall for a trick like that?
- Penelope** You did.
- Muddles** You're right I did. So we've got to find someone as daft as me.
- Penelope** That'll be difficult.
- Muddles** (*To audience*) Do you think we'll find someone as daft as me?
- Audience** No!
- (*Enter Friar Tuck or one of Merry Men*)
- Muddles** Hello, how are you?

Friar Fine, thanks, full of the joys of spring.

Muddles Aren't you tired?

Friar No, I'm not tired at all.

Penelope You look tired.

Friar Do you think so?

Penelope Yes. Are you sure you're sleeping well?

Friar I did last night.

Muddles But do you sleep well every night?

Friar Not every night. Sometimes I can't get to sleep.

Muddles Ahh! That'll be the noise.

Friar What noise?

Muddles The noise in the forest.

Penelope We've something here that will help you sleep.

Friar What is it?

Penelope It's a magic hat.

Muddles When you put it on your head you can't hear any noise at all, and you'll get a good night's sleep.

Penelope And we'll sell it to you for forty pounds.

Friar I'd need to see it working first.

Muddles No problem, we'll just give you a demonstration., *(They stand on either side of Friar and go into a long garbled story as before, miming when hat is on head and speaking when it is off. They both take turns at putting the hat on and off and telling the story. The whole thing gets frantic and the story doesn't make any sense. Friar finishes up with hat on).*

Friar Pardon? *(Removes hat)* Marvellous, but before I hand over forty pounds can I have one more demonstration?

Penelope Of course you can. And this time we'll do something very unusual.

Muddles I hope we don't get arrested.

Penelope No. We're going to sing.

Muddles We will get arrested.

Penelope We're going to sing a song entitled "If we had to do it all over again, we'd do it all over you".

Muddles My all time favourite. *(They sing and mime a chorus of song. They alternately sing and mime lines of song but this time Friar is putting hat on*

and off his own head, trying to catch the two of them out as they sing and mime.)

- Penelope** What do you think?
- Friar** Great. I'll take it. *(He starts to exit wearing hat.)*
- Muddles** Hey, where's our forty pounds? *(Tapping Friar on shoulder).*
- Penelope** Come back, we want our money.
- Friar** I'm sorry I can't hear a thing you're saying with this hat on. *(Exit Friar laughing).*
- Muddles** Done again.
- Penelope** Never mind. I'm hungry. Did you bring the sandwiches?
- Muddles** Yes. *(Takes two sandwiches from haversack and gives one to Penelope. The sandwiches are about six inches thick).*
- Penelope** What do you call these?
- Muddles** Dainty Bites.
- Penelope** Are we having a drink of milk?
- Muddles** No, I know someone who died having a drink of milk.
- Penelope** How did that happen?
- Muddles** The cow fell on him. *(A very loud growl is heard)*
- Penelope** Manners.
- Muddles** Pardon?
- Penelope** That's better. *(Another growl is heard)* You are rude.
- Muddles** It's not me. Your tummy rumbled.
- Penelope** It didn't.
- Muddles** It did. *(To Audience)* It did didn't it? *(Then when audience say "Oh no it didn't")* Oh yes it did. *(Work audience)*
- Penelope** Just a minute. If it wasn't your tummy, and it wasn't mine. What was it growling?
- Muddles** It could have been a grizzly bear.
- Penelope** There's no grizzly bears here. *(Bear crosses upstage of them and exits).*
- Audience** Oh yes there is. There's a bear.
- Penelope** Oh no there isn't. *(Work audience).* *(To Muddles)* Look, finish your sandwich. *(Enter bear. Audience yell)*
- Audience** There's a bear.

- Muddles** There's a what? A bear? Where? Over there? (*Work business going from one side of stage to other – bear crossing upstage to opposite side.*)
- Penelope** Come here. (*They meet centre stage, leaving a slight gap between them for the bear to come between them*). If the bear isn't at that side (*indicates left*) and it isn't at this side (*indicates right*) it can only be here in the middle. (*They have both been facing front – at this point they turn inwards to each other to find the bear standing between them*).
- Penelope and**
- Muddles** Aahhh!!! (*Bear chases them round a few times and then off left. Bear suddenly turns and sees button. Shows by exaggerated movements that it has seen and is reading the sign and is about to push the button. Enter Muddles left*)
- Muddles** Heh! Leave that button alone. (*Realises it is the bear*) Aahhh!! (*Bear chases Muddles around the stage and they both exit left.*)
(*Entrance of Marion, Babes and John right. Sound of laughter is heard. Marion enters first waving soft ball. Enter others, confused shouting and laughter until established that they are playing 'Pig-in-the-middle'. Peter finally catches ball*)
- Peter** I've caught it. Come on Little John, in the middle.
- John** No fear. I've had enough for today.
- Marion** Here's the farm. Now Peter, Robin put you in charge – what were his orders?
- Peter** Collect from the farm – eggs, vegetables and milk.
- Pauline** As much as we can carry.
- Marion** And what pray do you propose to carry the milk in?
- Peter** The milk pails of course.
- Pauline** Oh! The milk pails. We've left them.
- John** (*Laughs at this*) Fine outlaws you'd make. The Sheriff would have you behind bars in no time. Borrow a pail from the farm dairy. I'll go to the stream and see if the fish are biting. I promised Robin I'd take him back a fine trout.
- Marion** You won't go far away John?
- John** I'll be within ear-shot. When you're ready all you have to do is call. (*Exit John left*)
- Pauline** Isn't it exciting living in the country.

- Peter** I think I'd like to live in the country. It's my dream holiday. (*Cue for number. Peter, Pauline and Marion*) (48)
- Marion** Now come along children, let's walk over to the dairy and see what the farmer has for us.
- Pauline** Here's someone coming now. Perhaps this is the farmer.
- Marion** (*Suddenly cold but calm*) I know who it is. Listen to me carefully children. Run for your lives. Find Little John.
- Babes** But Marion –
- Marion** Do as I say. Go! (*Exit Babes left*) The Sheriff. I must divert his attention from the Babes. (*Enter Sheriff and Robbers right*)
- Sheriff** Curse it. The birds have flown. Seize the maid. (*Robbers hold Marion*) The Babes, wench! Where are the Babes?
- Marion** The Babes are not here. I am alone.
- Sheriff** That's a lie. We heard voices.
- Marion** I'm alone I tell you. The Babes are with Robin Hood.
- Sheriff** They were here a moment ago. I know it. (*Picking up ball*) Unless my Lady Marion has taken to playing games on her own. (*To Robbers*) One of you find the young wretches and bring them back to me. (*Dan releases Marion and exits left*) (*To Des*) Hold the girl. We may not find the Babes but if I hold Maid Marion a bargain may be struck.
- Des** I don't think that's fair.
- Sheriff** Do as I say. (*Des moves to Marion but is intercepted by Little John entering left and throwing arm round his neck*)
- John** Not so fast my friend. (*Sheriff makes a rush for John who seizes him round neck also. He now has a head under each arm and swinging them round to smack their heads together – they stagger away in comic fashion. Sheriff and Des both rush John again. He grabs each one by front of tunic and shakes them, finally throwing them to the floor on top of one another. He places his foot on them in victory fashion*). They have no stomach for a fight.
- Dan** (*Who has entered left unseen*) Here's one who has. (*Drops a rope over John's head and round his chest fastening his arms to his body. While he is helpless all three attack him and tie him up. Marion tries to stop them but one of the Robbers holds her while other two finish the job.*)

Sheriff Tell your master the self styled Lord of Sherwood that Maid Marion is held by me. She will be released when the Babes are returned to my tender mercy.

Marion *(To John)* Tell Robin I do not fear the Sheriff. He must protect the Babes.

Sheriff Away with her. *(All move to exit, pulling her with them.)*

Robbers and

Sheriff Oh, we are awful. We are an' all. *(Exit Robbers, Sheriff and Marion right. John struggles but cannot get out of ropes which tie him still on stage)*

John Fool, fool, that I was. I should have stayed with the Babes and Marion. *(Sees Peter approaching left)* Peter! Peter! *(Enter Peter left)* – quickly. Untie these bonds. *(Peter does so)* Where's your sister?

Peter She ran to the forest for help. The Merry Men are on their way, I've heard the sound of the horn. *(Hunting horn heard off left)* There it is again. *(Realises Marion is not there)* Where's Marion?

John Taken hostage by the Sheriff.

Peter What shall we do?

John Robin must decide. *(Hunting horn heard again louder)* Robin! Here Robin. *(Calling off left to him. Enter Robin, Merry Men and Pauline, left).*

Robin John, tell me the worst.

John The Sheriff has Marion. My fault Robin.

Robin No time for recriminations now. We must gain entry to the castle itself. Men are you with me?

Men Aye.

John As always Robin, but how?

Robin Surprise, that has always been the element of our success. The point is, how to achieve this once more.

Friar Robin, knowest thou well I take a great interest in my food?

- Robin** Well?
- Friar** Tonight the castle will be the scene of much feasting and entertainment. The Goose Fair is over and it's the Sheriff's custom to give a banquet for his household. May not the defences be rather slack on such an occasion?
- John** We'll take the place by assault.
- Robin** Entertainment you said – perhaps then – the Sheriff would welcome some entertainment from a quartet of travelling minstrels. If the quartet were Alan-a-Dale, myself and two others the entertainment might prove more lively than he bargained for.
- All** *(Laugh. Ad lib)* Well said Robin etc – *(ad lib)*
- Robin** Thus we shall gain entrance to the castle.
- John** What of the rest of us?
- Robin** You will lay in wait by the main gate. When you hear three blasts on my hunting horn, then you attack in force. This time we shall put an end once and for all to the Sheriff's reign of terror. *(All cheer. Finish scene with (50) reprise of Act I Merry Men number. If necessary sing this in front of tabs to allow for scene change. Otherwise tabs close as lights fade to blackout at end of reprise)*

Interlude

Tabs

*(Enter Fairy)***Fairy** Once more the Sheriff's gained the upper hand. (51)

And yet there's Robin and his gallant band,

With many scores to settle, debts to pay,

With bravery and wits they'll find a way.

Thanks to brave Marion, the Babes are safe this day

But she is held at risk, in castle grey,

The Sheriff values human life as nought,

He deals in threats, Robin cannot be bought.

Fair Marion in fair measure, courage shows,

This I renew in her as danger grows.

Her loyalty to Robin 'till the battle ends

Will bring true greatness to the outlaw and his friends.

FADE TO BLACKOUT AS FAIRY MUSIC CONTINUES AS

BRIDGE TILL SCENE 11 READY TO OPEN.

THEN OPEN TABS AS MUSIC CHANGES TO NUMBER 52

Scene 11

Full set

Nottingham Castle – The Courtyard

(Although it should be practical to set this scene during Scene 10 (52) a procession to the feast could take place in front of tabs. A huge feast for the Sheriff's household is in progress outdoors in the castle courtyard within the castle walls. At right side there is a wing piece which is double wooden castle doors secured by a bar which goes across them both and drops into "L" shaped supports. To open lift up bar. The bar is not actually fastened to door itself. It is loose. Sequence music continues with household paying court to Sheriff, seated with unco-operative Maid Marion. Table is spread left to right upstage but this is not a sit down feast – laughing, drinking, good natured by-play. This is during the opening non-vocal music sequence. Music cuts)

1st Man Members of the household, I give you a toast. To our Lord and benefactor Sir Caspar, High Sheriff of Nottingham. *(His health is drunk by all)*

Sheriff I thank you all for this touching token of your respect and loyalty. *(To Marion)* My dear, you do not drink.

Marion My heart is full of loathing for you.

Sheriff As you wish. My especial pleasure this evening is to welcome as my guest a somewhat cold and reluctant Lady Marion. Know you all, my Lady is free to wander wherever she may choose – within the castle. The door is barred, the moat is deep and we enjoy her company. She may wish that some of her friends were here. My hospitality does not extend to that. Steward, let us be entertained.

Steward My Lord, I have tumblers to delight you. *(Quick music for short (53) acrobat routine from some of the dancers. At end guests show their appreciation and laugh and applaud)*

Sheriff You don't seem to care for our humble entertainment, me dear. *(Marion turns away but says nothing – and breaks down a little)* Maid Marion is overcome. To cheer her what's next, Steward?

- Steward** A troupe of wandering minstrels Sire, who lately presented themselves at the north gate.
- Sheriff** What payment do the vagabonds require?
- Steward** Why none Sire. Other they say, than the joy of beholding your face as the entertainment shall unfold.
- Sheriff** Gratifying. Summon them and bid them sing. (*Enter left Robin, Alan and two other Merry Men disguised as minstrels*)
- Alan** My Lord of Nottingham. For your delight, a song of freedom. (*They sing the Minstrels Lay. Robin sings first four lines. As soon as Robin begins to sing Marion, startled, looks up. She has recognised him. While all four singing last four lines of first verse, Robin has a good look round and spots door with bar across and by nods and gestures shows others who show they understand. When Robin begins singing solo first four lines of second verse, the other three drop out of the picture and quickly take up strategic positions – the two Merry Men at sides of door right. Robin moves round, singing to crowd and works to position near Alan. Merry Men move nearer to door. Sheriff notices men moving near door.*)
- Sheriff** Guards, stop those men. (*Robin immediately blows three blasts on horn. Two Merry Men lift bar from door*)
- Sheriff** Yonder minstrel is Robin Hood. Seize him. (*Pandemonium breaks out (55) and fighting ensues. At this point the members of the household flee. The fight is between the four Merry Men and the Sheriff's guard. All Merry Men led by John surge in through doors. Large scale fight with soldiers takes place. Robin and men triumph. During fight Sheriff tries to escape using Marion as shield but is finally overcome and disarmed by Robin personally. Sheriff is pinned to wall. Soldiers stagger off or are beaten off stage rather than die on stage. All the above fighting is to frenetic music. All Merry Men cheer as Robin and Marion embrace.*)
- 1st M. Man** Here come the Babes. (*Enter Babes with John right*)
- Pauline** Marion (*Running to her*)

- Peter** Robin (*Running to him*)
- Robin and**
- Marion** Children
- Sheriff** Robin Hood, I have a proposition to put to you.
- Robin** You're wasting your breath.
- Sheriff** Wait. I offer you your freedom – you may go back to Sherwood unpunished for this escapade.
- Robin** Caspar, Sheriff of Nottingham, you have had your say. Now I shall tell you what you will do. Before witnesses now present you will hand over custody of the Babes to Maid Marion and myself. You will hand over Nottingham castle to me.
- Sheriff** By what authority do you attempt to dictate to me?
- Robin** By Royal authority.
- Sheriff** From Prince John?
- Robin** Nay, from the court of our good King Richard – the Lion-heart.
- Sheriff** Richard is in the Holy Land.
- Robin** You are mistaken. Now he treads the earth of England again. Hear me as I read – 'I Richard, King of England, hereby decree that all appointments held by my brother Prince John, shall be revoked'. (*Puts parchment down and looks at Sheriff*) You are no longer Sheriff of Nottingham. (*Continues reading*) – 'In Nottingham county I give free pardon to the so called outlaw Robin Hood and all his followers. (*All cheer*).
- Sheriff** Even so you have no right to give orders to me.
- Robin** (*Reading*) – 'The said Robin Hood shall carry out the duties of Sheriff of the city of Nottingham until it shall be the King's pleasure to appoint a successor.

The present Sheriff to be held in custody and await trial'. Men, if you are my men, you are the King's men. Take him away.

(Men lead Sheriff away protesting. Sheriff gives last hiss to audience and exits left)

Robin *(Taking sword and holding it in front of him in the air.)* I renew allegiance to Richard of England. *(Finish scene with "Rose of England" or similar number sung to attention).* (56)

FADE TO BLACKOUT AT END OF NUMBER AND TABS CLOSE

Scene 12

Tabs

St Oblong's Square

Muddles *(Entering)* Do you know I've been telling everybody not to push that button and I don't know what happens if you do push it. I think I'll push it and see shall I? Oh yes I will *(work audience)* Right, here goes. *(He pushes button and then runs to left side of the stage to see what happens. There is a whirring, buzzing sound as if a great clock is about to strike and a giant hammer made of foam rubber appears from the wings on the side of the stage he is standing at and hits him on the head, knocking him over.)*

(Enter Penelope right, pulling on the Robbers. They have their wrists tied and the rope extends like a lead).

Penelope I'll bet everybody thought I was doing nothing. I've been busy capturing these two.

Muddles Well, now we've got them what are we going to do with them?

Penelope Well, I don't know really. What would you do? *(To Musical Director)*

M.D. *(In Pit)* Why don't you ask the audience?

Muddles We will. What shall we do with them?

(Ad lib receiving suggestions about hanging, poisoning, cutting throats etc.)

Muddles I'll tell you what. A fate worse than death.

Penelope What's that?

Muddles Send them to watch – *(local football team doing badly)* every home match.

Dan Don't harm us. We've turned over a new leaf.

Des We've given up smoking, we don't drink alcopops and now we only write polite words on walls.

Dan But we do realise we've been naughty and we deserve a good smacking.

- Muddles** Right, well have we got any boys and girls with good smacking arms?
- Penelope** We want a smacking team up from the audience. Two boys and two girls to give them a good smacking. (*Four children from the audience in turn smack Des and Dan with rolled up newspapers*)
- Muddles** That's enough. Look you've made them cry. (*Robbers deny they are crying and dry their eyes*).
- Penelope** So you're going to be good in future?
- Dan** Yes, we're going to be good.
- Des** We are 'an all. (*Robbers exit right*)
- Muddles** What's your name? (*M. asks kids names and where they come from. To smallest*) You can't half smack hard. I'll bet you made those Robbers' bottoms smart. (*To Penelope*) When it comes to smacking they're a set of smarties.
- Penelope** Which reminds me, that's exactly what I've got for a present. Smarties for each of them. (*Give kids sweets and send them back to audience*)
- (*Cue for selected community song*) (57)

FADE TO BLACKOUT AFTER LAST TIME CHORUS AND TABS OPEN

Finale

Full set

The Wedding of Robin Hood*(Finale walk down)* (58)*(Use same scenery as Scene 12 with additional bunting, flags etc.)**(Cut music for Tag Lines)***Robin**

Our story had laughter, song and dance,

As all good stories should –

Marion

Goodbye from Robin and myself

Babes

And us, the Babes in the Wood

(Full company sing one chorus of finale walkdown) (59)

CURTAIN

(Play-out music) (60)

Appendix A

DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

IMMORTAL

Fairy Silverleaf Straight acting ability or singer or dancer in ballet with talent to speak in rhyming couplets

MORTALS

Sir Caspar Dyed in the wool heavy villain able to play the audience

Sheriff's Steward Character support, officious bully but a coward under pressure

Maid Marion Principal girl, attractive and appealing with pop singing and dancing ability

Peter and Pauline Kiddies, boy and girl or could be two girls, one playing a boy
Lovable, mischievous kids

Penelope Penwiper Traditional panto Dame. Bossy but with a playful side. Ability to feed comic and work with Babes

Muddles Leading comic. Naughty boy. Thinks he knows it all but always showing his ignorance

Dirty Dan Character Comic. Wicked but comic

Dizzie Desmond Character Comic. A craven comic idiot

Robin Hood Principal boy. If played by a girl, should be singer and dancer. If by man, must sing. Heroic

Little John Robin Hood's Merry Men. All except Friar could be played by girls. All need to be able to give lines and move for fight sequences

Friar Tuck “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “

Alan-a-Dale “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “

Will Scarlet “ “ “ “ “ “ “

Important Note:

Pop singer means not necessarily a straight singer but certainly someone with an ability to put over a number

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Appendix B

“BABES IN THE WOOD”

Production Notes (Scene by scene in addition to those in script)

- Scene 1** Sheriff’s escort uniformed in middle ages style with swords (wooden painted silver or metal rubber tipped) Working costumes for others in middle ages style as far as possible.
- Merry Men and a few townsmen carry staffs.
- Each time Muddles’ button is pushed, culprit ad libs intentions. Muddles ad libs admonishment.
- When Penelope enters she crosses down right to the end of the Kiddies’ diagonal line (from up left to down right). As Kiddies exit Penelope moves centre approvingly and gets whirled round by Kiddie entering late.
- Robin and all Merry Men (except Friar Tuck and Will Scarlet) are dressed in traditional Lincoln green. Will’s costume is mainly brown but with one item scarlet. Friar is dressed in long corded black tunic and wears bald wig with ring of hair round. Some men have bows on shoulders and sheaths of arrows. Girls can play Merry Men if necessary. Little John should be tall and sturdy.
- One trolley remains in wings only slightly offstage until skipping ropes are taken out of it. Unless one Babe is particularly adept at skipping, one long rope would suffice with one person at each end. Comics disentangle themselves during applause at end of number.
- Babes recoil from Sheriff each time he goes near them.
- Page 22. Robin and Merry Men’s disguise consists of hooded cloaks. When fight is over, discarded cloaks are picked up and heaped on stalls.
- Scene 2** Penelope now wears schoolteacher’s gown and square cap with tassel. She leads Kiddies on and stands left. As she inspects hands etc she crosses centre and then returns left for Kiddies’ exit. She then crosses right for button business muttering ad lib “I’ll push this button” etc. She stands left of Muddles for interrogation of him. His shirt is in such tatters (for example collar is loose) that it pulls away with care from top pocket which does not actually exist except as an opening. Shirt is not tucked in trousers.
- Scene 3** Slapstick is made of two flat pieces of wood stuck or bound together for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the length. Remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ is loose enough to provide a satisfying slap sound when punishment is administered. The victim will find it painless.
- White emulsion paint should rub out with wet cloth. Chalk itself can be used if legible.

Each time Muddles returns to sit on trick form, Robbers are re-seated (unless specifically indicated to the contrary) Falls are covered by SFX (rimshots)

Scene 4 Lollipops are inedible!

Scene 5 J20 pronounced JAY-TWO-OH

Set toy cupboard leading off into wings so that kiddies as toys crawl from wings through cupboard door and appear to be emerging from cupboard crammed with toys. Paddington is last one in and is whisked in to SFX (siren whistle).

Sheriff pays out rope downwards as if from a height to ground below. Similarly Robbers' entrance must appear to be from down below.

Robbers position themselves on the open side of the beds to awake Babes.

Fingers business covered by SFX (coconut block)

Scene 7 Babes huddle together upstage right centre.

Des pulls himself together to SFX (drum roll and ratchet)

Scene 8 Ball used in cricket is a soft one. Keep a spare in the bag. If ball rolls offstage alert orchestra to hand it back or employ two hidden fielders front of auditorium. If ball travels any further than front row, use spare ball and sack the cricketers! Wickets have freestanding base. Bat is small and plastic (beach type).

Tackle thrown offstage should be caught by Little John or stage crew. Dropping and causing a clatter is undesirable. Have duplicate tackle in the wings for Little John to be sure of entering with it.

Scene 10 Penelope adjusts her bra to SFX (rimshot)

Penelope lifts her skirt SFX (Swanee whistle)

The story told by Penelope and Muddles should be the same each performance so that Friar knows where he is in the scheme of things. It could be a garbled fairy story, a shaggy dog story (clean) or a holiday reminiscence – or anything!

Words and melody of “If We Had to Do It! available from writers.

Bear growl benefits from amplification and can be covered from wings.

Ball for “Pig-in-the-Middle” should be kiddie size soft ball. At end of game it should be placed near proscenium arch in the same place each performance so that Sheriff finds it easily. A flat ring stops it rolling if stage is raked.

Little John when tied up is dumped on the ground.

Scene 11 Acrobat routine can be simple gymnastics – somersaults, whirling dervish, cartwheels, handstand, Morris men actions, tambourine, drum majorettes waving ribbons, two slapping palms like athletes' “bunch of fives”. Much

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screaming, running about and posturing. Hectic up-tempo musical accompaniment and extemporised SFX. Abide by Health and Safety Regulations.

“Minstrels Lay” available from writers. One minstrel mimes playing property lute.

Fight is wrestling, staffs and forcing the soldiers to drop their swords. Daggers (wooden, rubber or rubber-tipped) can be used. Aim for fight to be over in $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ minute.

Royal household re-enters immediately fight is over but cling together until they are sure of the situation.

Sheriff keeps up torrent of abuse ad lib until his final exit. He must work the audience.

Scene 12 Smacking team is pre-selected by front of house staff and escorted to stage where Penelope takes charge of them.