

# **BABES IN THE WOOD**

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**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) Pauline)	Kiddies, boy and girl or could be two girls, one playing boy
Penelope Penwiper (The Village Schoolmistress)	Dame
Muddles (The Sheriff's Messenger)	Leading comic
Dirty Dan ) ) (The Robbers) Dizzie Desmond )	Character comics
Robin Hood (An Outlaw)	Principal boy
Little John ) ) Robin Hoods's Merry Men ) All except Friar could be Friar Tuck ) played by girls ) Alan-a-Dale ) ) Will Scarlet )	Tall and well built  Chunky  Straight  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*)

**1<sup>st</sup> crowd** ROBIN HOOD – a villain!

**2<sup>nd</sup> crowd** He is no villain.

**3<sup>rd</sup> crowd** He robs the rich to give to the poor.

**4<sup>th</sup> 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 is 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.
- 1<sup>st</sup> 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.
- 1<sup>st</sup> girl** Well I never did.
- Muddles** Going by what’s in that letter you must have done.
- 1<sup>st</sup> 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?
- 1<sup>st</sup> 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* )

**1<sup>st</sup> Townsfolk** But I tell you it's true. Someone has seen him. )

**2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

**1<sup>st</sup> Townsfolk** The Sheriff's increasing the rents.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Townsfolk** Trebling them.

**4<sup>th</sup> Townsfolk** And we have to pay before nightfall.

**5<sup>th</sup> 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 REPRIZE

## 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.