

# *BABES IN THE WOOD*

A PANTOMIME BY

STEPHEN DUCKHAM



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*BABES IN THE WOOD***CAST (in order of appearance)**

FLOGGEM	)	
WHIPPEM	)	The Sheriff's Henchmen
SIR SILAS SKINFLINT	)	The Sheriff of Nottingham
ROBIN HOOD		
MAID MARION		
JACK	)	
JILL	)	The Babes
NURSE JEMIMA JOLLOP		
NELL NIGHTSHADE		The Witch of Sherwood Forest
GREENWILLOW		A Woodland Sprite

A GHOST  
A SKELETON  
HEADLESS

FRIAR TUCK	)	
WILL SCARLET	)	Men of
ALAN-A-DALE	)	Sherwood
LITTLE JOHN	)	

KING RICHARD THE FIRST

CHORUS AND DANCERS: TOWNSPEOPLE OF NOTTINGHAM, ROBIN'S GANG and BALLET CHARACTERS.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENESACT ONE

SCENE 1	NOTTINGHAM TOWN
SCENE 2	THE LONG CORRIDOR IN NOTTINGHAM CASTLE
SCENE 3	THE HAUNTED WEST WING
SCENE 4	THE LONG CORRIDOR IN NOTTINGHAM CASTLE
SCENE 5	DEEP IN SHERWOOD FOREST (Into Transformation.)

ACT TWO

SCENE 1	NOTTINGHAM GOOSE FAIR
SCENE 2	THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN
SCENE 3	ROBIN HOODS HIDE-OUT IN SHERWOOD FOREST
SCENE 4	ON THE WAY HOME
SCENE 5	THE GREAT HALL AT LOCKSLEY CASTLE

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PRODUCTION NOTESSCENERYACT ONE

- SCENE 1 NOTTINGHAM TOWN  
A full stage set with medieval buildings R & L including a pub and a house with a practical door. The backcloth shows other parts of town.
- SCENES 2&4 THE LONG CORRIDOR IN NOTTINGHAM CASTLE  
Front cloth
- SCENE 3 THE HAUNTED WEST WING  
A half stage bedroom set with practical doors R & L and one UC with a trick panel to one side. The NURSE should open the UC door wide covering the trick panel so the actor playing HEADLESS can slip through it and be revealed when the door is shut.  
The wall behind the bed head should have an opening to enable a stagehand to pull the sheets through.  
The trunk at the foot of the bed should be hollow so the actor playing the SKELETON/GHOST can exit under the bed and through the back of the set.
- SCENE 5 DEEP IN THE FOREST  
Two part scene. The first part is a set with trees etc. As the Ballet starts the backcloth flies away to reveal the ballet setting. If possible a star cloth to back this scene would be most effective. The use of dry ice or smoke will add to the transformation effect.

ACT TWO

- SCENE 1 NOTTINGHAM GOOSE FAIR  
Same as Act 1 Scene 1 with bunting and stalls added for the fair.
- SCENE 2&4 OUTSKIRT OF NOTTINGHAM/ON THE WAY HOME  
Front cloth.
- SCENE 3 ROBIN HOODS HIDE-OUT  
Basic setting can be the same as Act 1 Scene 5 with the addition of bushes and a fire.
- SCENE 5 THE GREAT HALL AT LOCKSLEY CASTLE  
Walk down. This scene can be as impressive as possible with heraldic banners showing various Coat of Arms etc.

### CHARACTERS

Robin can be played by either a man or woman, but must always have that strong determined character. The Sheriff is the villain of the piece who always leaves himself open to ridicule. Floggem and Whippem are the knockabout comedy characters who, although at first in the employ of the Sheriff, should always have the audience on their side. Whippem usually has the upper hand with Floggem getting most of the knocks! Marian is a spirited Principal Girl . please don't play her too demure or wet. Nell Nightshade is an old crone . warts and all! She has a cackle-like laugh and dreadful halitosis. Greenwillow is the *Good Fairy* of the piece . a loveable character who gives the impression she always likes a good gossip! Jack and Jill should be around the age of ten or eleven. And finally Nurse Jemima Jollop, the comical Dame and should always be played by a man. A large character in every sense of the word and always played for laughs.

The company can be as large as you like with as much individuality as possible. Robin's Band of Men is made up of the Male Chorus but only take on their individual characters in Act Two.

The placing of musical numbers and who sings them is suggested in the script, but it is up to the director to decide what to use. A word of advice: Pantomime audiences . particularly the younger members . like the story to keep moving, so don't make the musical sequences too long, especially ballads.

I hope you enjoy doing this version of *Babes in the Wood* and have a great success with your production.

Stephen Duckham

### AUTHOR'S NOTE

This pantomime of *Babes in the Wood* has an alternative version entitled *Robin Hood*.

I was asked to write *Robin Hood* to avoid casting children in the *Babes in the Wood* story. Both scripts have a number of similarities in the dialogue and characters, but where the plot in this version centres around the Babes and the Sheriff trying to get his hands on their inheritance, *Robin Hood* has Robin as the central character and Maid Marion the object of the Sheriff's greed. In both scripts the use of a junior chorus is optional.

ACT ONE  
SCENE 1 NOTTINGHAM TOWN

[A typical Medieval Town Centre with various buildings including a pub called 'The King's Arms'. On the backcloth in the distance can be seen Nottingham Castle. There is a large pot by the pros. down right. This contains a trick tree that is required to grow and has leaves resembling ears. The CHORUS of TOWNSFOLK sing the opening song depicting life in Nottingham.]

OPENING NUMBER . CHORUS

[At the end of the number, FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM are heard shouting off.]

- BOTH            Make way, make way. *[THEY enter and cross through the crowd, ending C.]*
- FLOGGEM        Clear a way there.
- WHIPPEM        Come on you lot, shift!
- FLOGGEM        Messers. Floggem and Whippem here.
- WHIPPEM        He's Floggemō ō ō ō
- FLOGGEM        ō ō ō and he's Whippet!
- WHIPPEM        Whippem!
- FLOGGEM        And we are the Sheriff's henchmen.
- WHIPPEM        I'm his right hand man.
- FLOGGEM        And I'm his left one!
- WHIPPEM        No, no. You're a right one.
- MAN             You can say that again! *[ALL laugh.]*
- WHIPPEM        All right, all right. That's enough from you peasants. *[HE starts to make an announcement.]* Hear ye all. Draw near and give full attention for here comes his most malicious mountainship .
- FLOGGEM        His awesome awfulness .
- WHIPPEM        His noble nastiness .
- FLOGGEM        His deep down, dirty double-crossing, disgusting, dastardlyō ō ō *[WHIPPEM hits him and he falls. ALL laugh.]*
- WHIPPEM        Get up! *[FLOGGEM stands and they announce:]*
- BOTH            His *warship*, Sir Silas Skinflint, the Sheriff of Nottingham. *[ALL boo as the SHERIFF enters.]*

- SHERIFF Greetings you pathetic populace. I'm sure you all know why I'm here and what today is. *[ALL moan.]* Yes that's right. You've got it in one. Its tax-collecting time!
- MAN But you've taken taxes twice this year. You're nearly as bad as . *[Name of Chancellor of the Exchequer.]*
- SHERIFF True . but I'm much better looking! *[HE licks a finger and brushes his eyebrows.]*
- WOMAN It's just not fair.
- SHERIFF I know, I know. But life isn't fair, is it? You see with our dear King Richard away at the Crusades his brother, Prince John, has to keep the country going. And what with the cost of living, inflation, the upkeep of two or three castles, the chateau in the South of France – or I mean . times *is* hard, dear people times *is* hard!
- 2<sup>nd</sup> WOMAN Yes, and they'd be even harder for us.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> WOMAN With hungry kids to feed.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> MAN And hardly any work around. *[ALL moan.]*
- SHERIFF Oh do stop all this whinging and empty your pockets. *[Boos from the CHORUS. They encourage the audience to boo, also. The SHERIFF comes to the edge of the stage and addresses the audience.]* And you can shut up as well, or I'd double the tax on a new . *[HE names the latest children's electronic game. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEN push the CROWD back.]* But to show I'm not the heartless meany you all think I am, I've devised a little sporting entertainment for you all. Men, read the announcement.
- WHIPPEN Oh yez, oh yez.
- FLOGGEM Oh no! Oh no!
- WHIPPEN What's the matter?
- FLOGGEM I've lost the scroll!
- WHIPPEN Oh you idiot. You must have dropped it. *[THEY run around looking for the scroll, which is tucked into the back of FLOGGEM'S breeches.]*
- ALL It's behind you!
- WHIPPEN Oh come on, we're not falling for that old gag!
- SHERIFF You pair of bungling buffoons! *[HE pulls out the scroll.]*
- FLOGGEM Ooooh! That really hurt! *[The SHERIFF hits him and he falls. SHERIFF gives the scroll to WHIPPEN. An OLD WOMAN appears in the crowd.]*
- SHERIFF Here, read it out.

- WHIPPEM Oh yez, oh yez. In keeping with your noble Sheriff's kind and considerate nature . *[CROWD reacts.]* he is holding a grand archery contest to celebrate the opening of the Nottingham Goose fair this Saturday. The winner of the contest will receive a prize of 100 crowns. *[Big reaction.]*
- OLD WOMAN And where's the prize money coming from? Our taxes?
- SHERIFF What are you talking about, old woman?
- OLD WOMAN You'd just take the money you collect and give it back to us as the prize! *[ALL react.]*
- SHERIFF Listen you lot, it's not me who takes other people's money. That honour goes to your *friend* Robin Hood, that unscrupulous outlaw. And just remember there is a price on his head, so anyone found consorting with him will hang from the gibbet next to him when he is caught!
- MAN You'd never catch Robin Hood.
- WOMAN He's always one step ahead of you.
- SHERIFF He may be a master of disguise, but never fear, I'd catch him one day . and when I do ò ò *[HE mimes a noose around his neck, his head to one side and tongue hanging out.]* Ha ha ha! *[HE turns to leave and bumps into FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM.]* Come on you nauseating numbskulls! *[SHERIFF, FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM exit.]*
- WOMAN Oh if only Robin was here. He'd win that archery contest with ease.
- MAN But he wouldn't dare come into town while he knows the Sheriff and his men are on the look out for him.
- ROBIN *[Throwing off Old Woman disguise.]* That's where you're wrong, my friends! *[ALL gather around ROBIN and welcome him.]*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> MAN Robin, you should be careful. The Sheriff will be coming back soon to collect the taxes.
- ROBIN Don't worry about him. He hasn't managed to catch me yet and I don't intend to let him.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> WOMAN It's good to see you again, Robin.
- ROBIN And it's good to see all of you.
- MAN But where have you been these past few days?
- ROBIN Well, I heard a rumour that the Bishop of Nottingham has been making collections after the Sunday service that somehow end up in his vaults instead of being distributed amongst the poor. So when he made his annual visit to London yesterday, laden down with

moneybags, my gallant band of men and I decided to lighten his load! *[HE takes out money bags from inside his cloak and throws them to the CROWD.]* Here my friends. Now you've no need to worry about buying food or paying taxes!

- 3<sup>rd</sup> WOMAN Oh Robin, how can we ever repay you?
- ROBIN Well I didn't come into town just to bring you this good fortune. I was hoping to see the fair Maid Marion. *[MARION enters up stage unseen by ROBIN. SHE "Shh's" the CROWD.]* I don't suppose any of you have seen her today?
- WOMAN And what would such a high born lady be doing with the likes of you?
- ROBIN Well she has shown some interest
- MAN Besides, she's the Sheriff's ward and you know what would happen if he found her walking and talking to an outlaw.
- ROBIN Outlaw indeed! Why, everyone knows he stole my lands and title after my father was killed fighting along side King Richard in the Holy Land.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> MAN That's all very well, but how does Marion feel about you?
- 2<sup>nd</sup> WOMAN Does she think you are brave?
- ROBIN Yes.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> WOMAN And bold?
- ROBIN Yes.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> MAN And fearless?
- ROBIN Yes.
- 4<sup>th</sup> MAN And trustworthy?
- ROBIN Yes.
- 4<sup>th</sup> WOMAN And handsome?
- ROBIN Yes.
- MARION And just a little bit conceited?
- ROBIN Yes! No! *[HE turns and sees MARION.]* Marion! *[ALL laugh.]* How long have you been there?
- MARION Long enough my brave, fearless, handsome outlaw.
- ROBIN Oh Marion, it is good to see you.
- MARION But Robin, you shouldn't come into town in broad daylight, you know how dangerous it is.

ROBIN           How can I stay away if it means not seeing you? Besides, the good people of Nottingham are always looking out for me.

CROWD           Of course we are, Robin. You can always count on us. Etc.

ROBIN           I've also been hatching a plan not only to get your taxes back, but also to win that archery contest on Saturday.

MARION          But Robin, I heard the Sheriff telling his henchmen that he has rigged the match so that he will win.

ROBIN           Has he indeed? Well, I'd just have to make sure his plans come to nought. Never fear my friends; with your help . . . and yours Marion, we will put an end to all this tyranny and injustice. *[ALL cheer.]*

SONG . ROBIN, MARION & CHORUS

*[At the end of the number they ALL exit as the BABES – JACK and JILL – run on.]*

JACK            Oh Jill look, we've finally in Nottingham.

JILL            But where's nurse? I knew we shouldn't have run on so fast. We've lost her.

JACK            *[Looking around.]* She'd be here in a minute. I heard her say she needed something to settle her stomach after that long coach ride from Lincoln. She's just popped into that chemist called 'The King's Arms'

JILL            Jack, do you think we'd be all right living here in Nottingham with our uncle Silas? I feel rather afraid. He is the Sheriff you know.

JACK            I'm sure he'd be fine. After all, he's the only family we've got.

*[NURSE JEMIMA JOLLOP is heard talking off.]*

NURSE          *[Off.]* Oh, you are saucy! You really know how to flatter a girl!

JILL            Oh look, here comes nurse.

JACK            Quick, let's hide and surprise her. *[THEY hide up stage as NURSE JEMIMA JOLLOP backs out of the pub carrying a crate of beer. She is a typical Dame wearing an outrageous costume and sporting a large bosom.]*

NURSE          *[Talking to someone in the pub.]* Thank you for this. It'd do wonders for my equilibrium! I'd pop in tomorrow for a repeat prescription! *[SHE turns and looks round.]* Now where are those two Babes? Jack . . . Jill. *[SHE sees the audience.]* Oh hello. Have you come here specially to welcome me to Nottingham? Oh how nice. *[SHE puts the crate down]*

*centre.] Well let me introduce myself. I'm Nurse Jemima Jollop and I've just arrived here from Lincoln with my two charges, Jack and Jill. [SHE sits on the crate.] Mind you, I don't know where they've got to. They're always running off. You haven't seen them have you? [Audience reacts.] What? Where are they? [JACK and JILL creep down to R of NURSE.] Over here? [SHE looks left.] No they're not. [BABES move to L of her, as SHE looks right.] They're not over here, either. [The BABES jump down either side of her SHE falls back over the crate with her legs in the air. THEY help her up.] Oh you two! Fancy giving me a scare like that. You know I get palpitations! I shall have to have one of my tonics. [SHE takes a bottle out of the crate, knocks the top of and downs it in one. Sound effect of "glugging" noise. SHE then staggers L & R and finally back C. A sound effect accompanies this.] Oh that's better. I've fortified my follicles and bolstered my bust. [SHE goes to adjust her bust then starts some exercises.] Oh er, constitution! Now you two, have you found the castle and your uncle Silas yet?*

JACK No, we've been waiting for you.

JILL It must be around here somewhere.

NURSE Well why don't you go and look for it while I wait here? The journey has quite worn me out.

JACK All right nurse. Shall we take your medicine with us?

NURSE Oh that is kind of you dear. [BABES pick up crate.] But I'd better have another dose first, just to be on the safe side! [SHE downs another bottle. Same effect.] Oh that's revitalised my varicose veins! [BABES exit with crate.] Mind you I haven't felt right since we left home yesterday. As I said we had a terrible journey. We were reducing our carbon footprint you see. The Babes came on the local donkey, while I travelled by ass! It looked comfy on the donkey, but it certainly wasn't comfy on my ass. [SHE claps her hand to her mouth.] Mind you we girls have to keep ourselves looking our best, don't we? You never know when the man of your dreams is going to pop into your life. [SHE starts to exit as the SHERIFF enters and they bump into each other.] Oh girls look at it. [SHE says the name of a current pop or film star.]

SHERIFF Out of my way, you old hag!

NURSE Oh you do have a way with words!

SHERIFF Remove yourself from my presence, you fossilised old relic!

NURSE Here, who are you calling old?

SHERIFF Do you know who I am?

NURSE No, but if you have a lie down I'm sure you'll remember.

SHERIFF Who are you?

- NURSE I am Nurse Jemima Jollop, BBC, ITV, TSB and RAC! And spinster of this parish!
- SHERIFF Well I am Sir Silas Skinflint, The Sheriff of Nottingham.
- NURSE The Sheriff? Well what a co-in-ci-dence! I've been looking for you.
- SHERIFF *[Suspiciously.]* You have? Why?
- NURSE Well, until recently I was in the employ of your dear departed brother, Sir Bertram the Benevolent.
- SHERIFF Departed? Do you mean the old swine's son. my brother is no longer with us?
- NURSE That's right dear. Popped his clogs a month ago. And as you are his only living relative, naturally he wanted his two children to come and live with you.
- SHERIFF Children??
- NURSE Yes. Such sweet little terrors' son treasures they both are.
- SHERIFF But I hate children. I loathe and detest them. *[Audience reaction.]*
- NURSE Well dear, you're stuck with them. I have his last will and testament with me. *[From her vast apron pockets she pulls out various items including a frying pan, pair of bloomers and a bottle of gin. SHE gives them to the SHERIFF to hold.]* I'm sure it's here somewhere. *[SHE finds the will.]* Ah, here it is. *[SHE puts all the items back and hands the will to the SHERIFF.]*
- SHERIFF *[Reading quickly.]* And so my dear brother, I give into your safe keeping my two dear Babes and their trusted nurse. *[SHE beams at him and HE shudders and crosses away to the side of the stage.]* Each of the Babes will receive an annual allowance of 2,000 crowns! If anything unforeseen should happen to them, the money will of course come to you as my only surviving relative. *[HE can hardly contain his glee.]* I know I am leaving the Babes in safe hands and that you will give them a good home. Your loving brother, Bertram. *[Aside.]* Ooooh, just think, all that money and only two rag-a-muffin brats standing between it and me. But not for long. I shall have to devise a plan to get rid of them as soon as possible. But first I must gain the confidence of this weather beaten old witch. *[HE starts to cry loudly.]* Oh Bertram, my dear, dear brother. Gone, gone never to be seen again. Oh what am I to do? What am I to do?
- NURSE There, there dear. Don't upset yourself. Just come to nursie. She'll comfort you. *[SHE grabs his head and pushes it into her ample bosom.]* I know how it is, but just remember you've got me to turn to in your hour of need. *[HE comes up for air and SHE pulls him back.]* After all, if I can't give succour to someone like you at a time like this, I would be failing in my duties as a nurse!
- SHERIFF *[Pulling away.]* Madam please! I need assistance, not asphyxiation!

NURSE Oh I'm sorry, I was forgetting myself. Please forgive me your majesticals, but it has been so long since I've had a big, strong man to look after!

DUET . NURSE & SHERIFF

*[At the end of the number NURSE exits blowing a kiss to the SHERIFF. HE shudders then looks around. Seeing HE is alone HE calls.]*

SHERIFF Nell. Nell Nightshade where are you? I know you're around here somewhere. You're always lurking in the shadows.

NELL *[Off.]* Not lurking. Never lurking!

SHERIFF Come here. I want to talk to you.

*[NELL enters. SHE is a cross between a witch and an old crone. Slightly wild in appearance and able to make mischief at any time. Around her neck she wears a necklace of bones which she often rubs her fingers over. It is a source of her power.]*

NELL Hello, my dear. What do you want with old Nell? Something underhand no doubt. *[Fingering the necklace of bones.]* Or so the bones of my ancestors tell me. *[SHE laughs in his face and obviously has a problem with halitosis as the SHERIFF grimaces and covers his mouth and nose.]*

SHERIFF Ooh, your breath could strip paint. *[Pointing to the bone necklace.]* You still wear that disgusting old thing round your neck?

NELL It's the source of my power. Without it I wouldn't be able to help you with your nefarious deeds.

SHERIFF Hush. *[HE looks around to make sure no one is listening.]* I've just heard of the unfortunate death of my brother. But what is even more unfortunate is that I've been lumbered with his two children. The only good thing to come out of this is that they have an inheritance.

NELL And you want to get your hands on it.

SHERIFF How did you guess?

NELL I know you too well. They didn't call you slippery Silas for nothing at school. *[SHE laughs again in his face.]*

SHERIFF Ooooh! *[HE turns away, wafting the air with his hand.]* I need a plan to get rid of them . but it must look like an accident.

NELL *[Fingering HER necklace.]* I'm sure I could conjure up something . for the usual fee, of course.

SHERIFF Of course. But just remember that I granted you your freedom after the death of old Locksley.

- NELL Yes. That old goody-goody banished me for witchcraft. But I soon showed him. I put a curse on him and his family. Now he's dead fighting alongside that other goody-goody King Richard, long waiting to get revenge on his son. *[SHE gets excited at the prospect of revenge on ROBIN.]*
- SHERIFF Robin Hood! Another thorn in my side. But first things first. Think of a way to get rid of the Babes. Once that is done and I have their inheritance then we can turn our attention to that audacious outlaw.
- NELL Very well, Silas.
- SHERIFF It's My Lord Sheriff when we're in public.
- NELL Anything you say my dear.
- SHERIFF Meet me in the castle's long corridor in two hours. And make sure no one sees you. *[HE looks one way and SHE looks another. THEY then turn to look at each other. NELL cackles in his face. HE reels.]* Have you never heard of Listerine?
- NELL Are they a new pop group? *[SHE laughs again and HE exits quickly.]* So another dastardly deed the Sheriff wants doing. Right up my street! Since he became Sheriff I've made sure Silas finds my assistance invaluable. And in time we'll both put an end to Robin Hood and become the most powerful people in these parts. *[SHE cackles with laughter and exits left.]*

#### GREENWILLOW'S MUSIC

*[Mysterious music is heard and GREENWILLOW, the SPRITE of Sherwood Forest enters R. SHE is fun loving creature who enjoys playing tricks on the SHERIFF and his men. SHE should be played as a character with a twinkle in her eye and a bit of a chatterbox.]*

- G/WILLOW Hello there. I thought it was about time I popped along and introduced myself. I'm Greenwillow and I live nearby in Sherwood Forest. I suppose you could call me a sort of woodland sprite. I keep a watchful eye over all the inhabitants of these parts and make sure life doesn't get too hard for them. Mind you, since the Sheriff came to power it's been an uphill struggle. He's so mean taking so much in taxes, the poor people of Nottingham have hardly enough to feed and clothe themselves. That's where Robin Hood comes in. He's such a good fellow with a kind heart. I make sure he knows when the rich landowners are travelling through the forest so he and his merry men can relieve them of some of their excess wealth. Well, if charity doesn't begin at home I make sure it begins in the forest! Oh, and it does make the Sheriff mad! *[SHE giggles.]* The landowners blame him for not doing enough to catch Robin. And now those two Babes have arrived. Did you just hear him plotting with that old Nell Nightshade, the witch of Sherwood Forest? I'm really going to have my work cut out keeping an eye on things. *[SHE thinks.]* Wait a minute. You're going to be here for a while, aren't you? Would you like to help me? *[Reaction.]* OK then. Now watch this. *[SHE makes a magic pass at the*

*pot down right. A tree with leaves in the shape of ears grows up the pros.]* There, what do you think of that? This is my very special magic listening tree. I'll tell you how it works. Whenever the Sheriff or Nell or even those two bumbling henchmen start planning anything evil, the tree hears them and starts to shake. When you see that happening, call out my name. Will you do that? *[Reaction.]* Just call out *%Greenwillow+* and I'll come running. Shall we have a practice? *[To the tree.]* Now tree, when I go off pretend you've heard something terrible. *[SHE exits. The tree shakes and the audience reacts. SHE re-enters.]* Did anything happen? *[Audience reacts again.]* You'd have to shout much louder. I could be the other side of Sherwood Forest. Let's try again. *[The business is repeated.]* Oh that's great. Now I must be off so I'll leave you to keep watch. Bye. *[SHE exits with a wave. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM enter with a trick tax collecting box.]*

- WHIPPEM Now we've got to collect the taxes for the Sheriff. Go and knock on that door over there.
- FLOGGEM Right. *[HE knocks on a door and crosses back to WHIPPEM.]*
- WHIPPEM What are you doing?
- FLOGGEM I knocked on the door like you said.
- WHIPPEM But you're supposed to collect the tax. Now do it properly. *[FLOGGEM crosses to the door, knocks and a WOMAN opens it.]*
- WOMAN Yes?
- FLOGGEM I've come for the tax.
- WOMAN Here you are. *[SHE hands him a box of tacks.]*
- FLOGGEM Thank you very much. *[WOMAN shuts the door. FLOGGEM crosses back to WHIPPEM.]* That was easy.
- WHIPPEM What have you got there?
- FLOGGEM The tax!
- WHIPPEM Oooh! You're the next thing to an idiot!
- FLOGGEM In that case I'll move! *[HE takes a step away. WHIPPEM hits him and he falls.]*
- WHIPPEM How did I end up with you as a partner?
- FLOGGEM *[Getting up.]* I answered the ad in the newspaper!
- WHIPPEM I'll show you how it's done. *[HE goes around the stage banging on doors and calling.]* Come on you lot, it's tax collecting time. Anyone who does not pay up will spend a delightful few weeks as a guest of the Sheriff in the master dungeon with rack and en suite thumbscrew facilities! *[Groans all round as TOWNSPEOPLE enter.]* Come on, come on. Line up there and hand over your dosh! *[During the following, ROBIN enters wearing a cloak followed by MARION and the*

- BABES. ROBIN crawls under the tax box and makes a hole in the bottom with his knife.]*
- MAN This is an outrage.
- WOMAN We're going to starve to death. *[General moans.]*
- WHIPPEM *[To first MAN.]* Come on, pay up.
- MAN This is my life savings. *[HE gives a bag of money to WHIPPEM who throws it to FLOGGEM. FLOGGEM puts it in the box and it falls out of the bottom. ROBIN passes it to MARION and it gets passed back to the MAN. This is repeated with each bag.]*
- WHIPPEM Next.
- WOMAN It's all laid put by for a rainy day.
- WHIPPEM Well look at it this way . with global warming you won't be needing it! *[Grabs money.]* Next. *[More groans as the taxes are collected.]* Come on, come on. Cough up! *[After the final bag has been collected and returned.]* And that's the lot. *[HE crosses back to FLOGGEM who slams the lid down.]* Now that wasn't too painful, was it? *[The SHERIFF enters.]*
- SHERIFF Has all the money been collected?
- FLOGGEM Yes, your *warship*.
- WHIPPEM All present and accounted for, your battleship!
- SHERIFF Good. Now I'll be able to get the new *[Latest pop group album title.]* er, I mean Prince John will be eternally grateful for your contribution to the treasury.
- FLOGGEM Not to mention *[Chancellors name.]*
- SHERIFF Now let me see how much there is. *[HE opens the box and peers in smiling.]* Just look at that. It's empty. *[HE does a double take.]* EMPTY!! Ahgg! Where's all the money? *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM look inside the box.]*
- WHIPPEM But it was there.
- FLOGGEM We collected it ourselves.
- CROWD Yes they did. We saw them. Etc.
- SHERIFF Collected it *for* yourselves you mean. Did you put it in the box or in your own pockets? *[HE searches them.]*
- FLOGGEM Oh don't. You're tickling me! *[HE giggles.]*
- WHIPPEM But your honour, we did collect it. From everyone.

- SHERIFF Then there is only one explanation. I've been robbed! And there is only one person audacious enough to do such a thing in broad daylight. The outlaw Robin Hood. He must be around here somewhere. *[HE draws his sword.]* Search everywhere until he is found.
- ROBIN *[Still with his disguise on.]* I think I saw someone running down that street.
- SHERIFF Quick men, after him. He must not escape this time. *[ALL THREE run for the exit and get trapped. The SHERIFF pulls FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM back and runs off. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM fall over each other then run off. ALL laugh.]*
- ROBIN *[Taking off his disguise.]* Well, the Sheriff seems to have a few more problems to keep him busy.
- MAN All thanks to you, Robin. *[ALL agree.]*
- MARION Oh Robin, how I hate being in the castle with him.
- ROBIN Don't worry Marion. One day all this will change, you'll see. *[HE sees the BABES.]* But who have you got with you?
- MARION Two new friends. We just met at the castle. This is Jack and Jill. They've come all the way from Lincoln. *[To BABES.]* Jack, Jill. This is Robin Hood.
- JACK Wow! I've heard all about you. Can I be in your gang? *[ALL laugh. NURSE is heard calling off.]*
- NURSE Jack. Jill. Where are you? *[SHE enters and crosses down.]* Oh there you are. *[Looking at ROBIN.]* What are you doing with this strange man?
- MARION There's nothing strange about Robin.
- NURSE You're not standing where I'm standing.
- JILL This is Robin Hood.
- NURSE Oh really? Pleased to meet you Robin Hood? The outlaw? Oh we'll all be murdered in our beds! Help! Police! *[SHE runs around the stage shouting.]* Call out the army! Send for the Marines!
- JACK It's all right Nurse. He's a good man and I'm going to be in his gang.
- NURSE What?? *[SHE faints into the arms of a MAN.]*
- MARION Nurse, there's nothing to worry about. Robin wouldn't harm anyone. He's a friend to us all. *[ALL agree.]*
- NURSE *[Coming round.]* Oh well, if you're sure. *[SHE curtseys.]* Pleased to meet you.

ROBIN *[With a bow and kisses her hand.]* Likewise I'm sure. *[NURSE looks up and swoons.]*  
 NURSE Oh, I've come over all unnecessary. I think I need another tonic! *[SHE takes out a bottle from her apron pocket and downs it.]*

ROBIN And now good people, let's give our new friends a real Nottingham welcome.

*[ALL cheer.]*

COMPANY NUMBER . PART REPRISE OF OPENING CHORUS

*[At the end of the number the lights fade and the scene changes to.....*

SCENE 2 THE LONG CORRIDOR IN NOTTINGHAM CASTLE

*[Front cloth. NELL enters left.]*

NELL I've consulted my spirits. Checked the alignment of the stars and called on all the mystic powers and black arts . *[SHE rubs her fingers over the necklace.]* . of my ancestors to help me. And I've got it! I know how to help Silas achieve his aims. Oh I'm good. I should be writing the horoscopes for . *[SHE names the local paper then throws HER head back and cackles just as the SHERIFF enters. HE gets another blast of HER bad breath.]*

SHERIFF Oooh! It's like living next to the sewage works! *[HE moves away.]*  
 Well? What have you come up with?

NELL A plan. A wonderful plan.

SHERIFF What is it?

NELL You'd never guess. Never in a million years.

SHERIFF I don't want to guess. I want you to tell me.

NELL *[Giggling.]* It's brilliant.

SHERIFF *[Shouting.]* Tell me!!!

NELL *[Finger to mouth.]* Shhhh! You don't want everyone to hear.

SHERIFF *[Whispering.]* What's the plan?

NELL Put them in the West Wing.

SHERIFF Is that it? *[SHE Nods.]* What good will putting them in the West Wing do?

- NELL *[SHE looks around then puts HER face near HIS.] It's haunted! [SHE emphasises the 'H'.] They'd be frightened to death by a horrible hauntings!*
- SHERIFF *[Pulling back. Mulling over the idea.] That's not bad. Not bad at all. [HE begins to smile to himself.] Will there be ghosties?*
- NELL Gargantuan ghosties.
- SHERIFF Will there be ghoulies?
- NELL No dear!
- SHERIFF I must say this is one of your more inventive ideas!
- NELL I'd go and wake up the spirits and ghosts who have been lingering in limbo for centuries. They can have a spectres ball tonight and scare the life out of the little dears!
- SHERIFF *[Rubbing his hands.] In the morning they will be found . frightened to death, and no blood on my hands. Their inheritance will be mine! [HE starts to laugh and so does SHE. HE gets it in the face again as SHE exits.] I really must get the blacksmith to extract those mouldy teeth of hers. But first I must inform the Babes of their wonderful new apartment! [HE laughs evilly and exits. From the other side of the stage FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM enter out of breath.]*
- WHIPPEM Oh it's no good. You've let Robin Hood escape again.
- FLOGGEM What do you mean %d let him escape-? You were chasing him too.
- WHIPEEM Yes but if you hadn't stopped to buy that lottery ticket we'd have caught him.
- FLOGGEM Well I didn't want to miss out on a chance of winning. It's a double rollover. Then I could tell the Sheriff what to do with his rotten job.
- WHIPPEM I suppose you've got a point. But if you did win millions, what would you do about the begging letters?
- FLOGGEM I'd keep sending them.
- WHIPPEM If you don't like your job why don't you get another one?
- FLOGGEM Oh I had a different job once. I was a gravedigger.
- WHIPPEM Really?
- FLOGGEM Yes, but it was a bit of a dead end job!
- WHIPPEM Ooooh!
- FLOGGEM ære, I thought of applying for a job I saw advertised in the *[Name of local newspaper.]* It was for *[Name of local butcher.]*

- WHIPPEM Oh?
- FLOGGEM Yes, they wanted a shop assistant! *[HE falls about laughing as the SHERIFF enters.]* A shop assistant! *[Still laughing, HE clings to the SHERIFF who just stands there. Bit by bit FLOGGEM realises, stops laughing and moves away.]*
- SHERIFF So this is what you do all day long is it? No wonder that blackguard Robin Hood can roam around free, robbing me of every last gold piece while you two sit around doing nothing.
- FLOGGEM Oh we don't always sit around. Sometimes we lie down!
- SHERIFF Silence! You puny pair of pipsqueaks! *[HE has been spitting the words out at them. THEY wipe their faces.]*
- WHIPPEM Well, that saves us washing again this week.
- SHERIFF Now listen. We've been devising a dastardly plan to get rid of those two Babes. But it must look like an accident, so this is what I want you to do. You know that dark room at the end of the West Wing, well I want you to clean it up and prepare it for the Babes to sleep in.
- FLOGGEM But isn't that room supposed to be . *[Big swallow.]* – haunted?
- SHERIFF Precisely! The headless ghost of Sir Wilfred the Woebegone wanders about wailing all night. *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM cling to each other.]* It's bound to scare them to death and then all their lovely money will be mine.
- FLOGGEM But what about us? What if it scares us to death?
- SHERIFF Oh don't be ridiculous. Two big strapping lads like you can't be afraid of a headless ghost.
- FLOGGEM Do you wanna bet?
- SHERIFF Oh tosh.
- WHIPPEM Well in that case why don't you get the room ready?
- SHERIFF Me? Are you mad? Er, I mean we've got more important things to do around the castle. Affairs of state you know.
- FLOGGEM You don't think you're the teensiest, weensiest bit scared that it might pop out?
- SHERIFF Of course not.
- WHIPPEM No, of course not. You're the Sheriff and nothing could possibly frighten you.
- SHERIFF Quite right. *[NURSE enters behind the SHERIFF.]*
- NURSE Hello boys!

SHERIFF     *[Scared.]* Ahhh! *[HE falls into the arms of FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM.]*

NURSE        You see . I always have the same effect on men.

SHERIFF     *[Standing.]* Ah dear lady. I didn't see you there.

FLOGGEM     You can't really miss her in that outfit!

NURSE        You ought to try carrots. They're good for the eyes.

WHIPPEM     I tried carrots once, but they didn't work.

NURSE        Oh?

WHIPPEM     No. I nearly poked my eye out!

FLOGGEM     Oh do shut up!

SHERIFF     Right now you two, you have your orders. *[HE crosses to the other side of the stage and calls them.]* I want those two Babes out of the way before tomorrow dawns. Don't make any mistakes and make sure . *[HE says the name of an unpopular female personality as HE points to the NURSE.]* . doesn't know what you're up to.

FLOGGEM     Right boss. *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM cross to the exit.]*

NURSE        Where are you two going?

WHIPPEM     We have to go and prepare rooms for the Babes and your good self.

NURSE        In that case I'll come along with you. I want to make sure the accommodation is what I'm accustomed to.

FLOGGEM     Oh you'd love it. It's *frightfully* well appointed.

WHIPPEM     Yes, there isn't a *ghost* of a chance of you being disturbed!

NURSE        It sounds delightful. Where in the castle is it?

FLOGGEM     The haunted West Wing!

NURSE        Haunted?

WHIPPEM     By that he means the haunting music that comes from the minstrel gallery just along the corridor. Every night you can here the lilting music of . *[Pop group number.]* . playing sweetly and softly, wafting along into your luxurious room and slowly helping you to drift off into a deep, deep sleep. *[A long snore from FLOGGEM who has fallen asleep.]*

FLOGGEM     *[As WHIPPEM pushes him.]* Help! Help! The ghost!

NURSE        Ghost? Did he say ghost?

- WHIPPEM No, no. Host! *[Looking at the SHERIFF who is fuming.]* We'd better get on with our work.
- NURSE Wait for me. I can't wait to see our new apartment. Does it have a private bathroom?
- WHIPPEM Yes. We call it 'The Moat' *[ALL THREE exit right. The SHERIFF crosses to near the tree.]*
- SHERIFF Ha ha ha! Soon I shall be rid of those horrible Babes and then all their money will be mine. No one can stop me. Ha ha ha! *[The tree shakes and the audience reacts. GREENWILLOW enters and freezes the SHERIFF.]*
- G/WILLOW So master Sheriff, still plotting away, eh? Well I've got a few tricks up my sleeve. *[Mischievously.]* Shall we have a little fun with him? *[Audience reacts.]* Just watch this. He can't see me - only you can. *[SHE unfreezes the SHERIFF.]*
- SHERIFF ō ha ha ha! *[GREENWILLOW trips him.]* Oh what was that? The floor must be uneven. *[HE bends down to look at it. GREENWILLOW kicks him in the rear.]* Owww! That hurt. Who did that? *[HE looks off.]* Come out, come out I say. *[GREENWILLOW makes a magic pass and a flash goes off.]* Help, help. The place is on fire! *[SHE trips him again and HE goes sprawling.]* Ohhhhhh! *[SHE freezes him.]*
- G/WILLOW Thanks for your help boys and girls. Don't forget to keep watch and call me if he gets up to any more of his tricks. *[SHE makes a pass to unfreeze him then exits. MARION enters L.]*
- MARION My lord, what are you doing down there?
- SHERIFF *[Getting up. Embarrassed.]* Oh Marion, my dear. I was erō ō just checking to see if the floor was still there. Yes it is. *[HE stamps.]* Yes, it's definitely there! Perfectly safe to walk on, my dear.
- MARION Are you feeling well my lord?
- SHERIFF Of course. Especially for seeing you. Ah Marion, you grow more lovely each day.
- MARION Thank you, sir.
- SHERIFF Ever since your poor father passed on and you became my ward, I've grown very fond of you.
- MARION *[Grimacing.]* Really?
- SHERIFF You know I'd do anything for you. Oh this old heart of mine is beating passionately for you! *[HE clutches his right chest.]* Can't you hear it?
- MARION No. But maybe I could if it was beating on the other side!

SHERIFF Eh? *[HE looks down and swaps sides.]* Oh yes. I get so flustered when you are near. Oh Marion, can you find it in your soul to make an old man happy?

MARION Who?

SHERIFF Who?? Me of course! *[HE tries to hold her but SHE runs away.]*

MARION Oh no!

SHERIFF What's the matter?

MARION I . er . I thought I saw someone lurking in the shadows . by your money store.

SHERIFF My money store? *[HE draws his sword.]* It must be that Robin Hood, trying to rob me again. I'll get him this time. He'll not escape me. Wait for me my dear. I'll be back. *[HE exits L.]*

MARION Ugh! I hope not. Oh Robin, if only you were here.

#### SONG . MARION

*[At the end of the song the lights fade and the scene changes to.....]*

#### SCENE 3 THE HAUNTED WEST WING

*[A bedroom scene with three doors. One left to outside, one right that is a cupboard and a trick one up centre with a secret panel to one side. A bed is URC with a trunk large enough to hold a person at the foot of it. The light is very dim. NELL appears out of the shadows and starts to chant.]*

NELL Two orphan Babes are coming here  
To spend a sleepless night.  
So come you apparitions all  
And give them both a fright.  
Come ghost and ghoul and demon fiend,  
Invade this dismal room.  
Come spook and spectre from the grave  
And bring about their doom.

*[SHE gives another of HER awful cackles and exits as the music begins for the following sequence.]*

#### GHOST DANCE

*[There can be a choreographed routine to open this scene, perhaps done in UV. At the end of the dance the GHOSTS and GHOULS disappear as FLOGGEM slowly enters L. and looks around. HE moves*

*into the room as WHIPPEM enters backwards. THEY circle and bump into each other. BOTH scream and run to either side of the stage.]*

- WHIPPEM What did you go and do that for?
- FLOGGEM You bumped into me!
- WHIPPEM No I didn't. You bumped into me. Now come here and stop messing about.
- FLOGGEM *[Crossing C.]* It's very creepy. Do you think the rumours are true?
- WHIPPEM What rumours?
- FLOGGEM You know, about this room being haunted.
- WHIPPEM Well everyone says it is. But only at night. It's common knowledge that ghosts only come out in the dead of night.
- FLOGGEM Well I don't like it. Supposing we get scared to death instead of those Babes.
- WHIPPEM Look, I'm here with you and you're here with me. Nothing can harm us if we stick together. Right?
- FLOGGEM Right.
- WHIPPEM Good. Now let's get some light on the subject. Turn up that lamp.
- [FLOGGEM goes to a wall lamp and turns it up. The lights come up. As he walks away the lights go dim again. HE goes back and turns it up again. The same thing happens. HE tries a third time and when they go dim HE stamps hard and the whole room is suddenly full of light.]* Now first we'd better sweep the floor. You get a broom from that cupboard.
- FLOGGEM OK. *[HE crosses to the cupboard R and opens the door. A GHOST is standing there and hands him the broom.]* Thank you! *[HE shuts the door and starts to cross C.]* Ohhhõ õ õ
- WHIPPEM What's the matter?
- FLOGGEM There's a - there's a g-ghost!
- WHIPPEM Where?
- FLOGGEM In there.
- WHIPPEM Nonsense! Why would a ghost be in that cupboard?
- FLOGGEM I don't know, but it is.
- WHIPPEM Let me have a look. *[HE crosses to the door and opens it. The cupboard is empty.]* You see, it's empty.

- FLOGGEM But there was something there.
- WHIPPEM You're just trying to get out of doing any work. Now start sweeping.
- FLOGGEM I need a dustpan.
- WHIPPEM I'll get it. *[HE crosses to the cupboard and opens the door. The GHOST hands him a dustpan. WHIPPEM shuts the door, does a 'take', opens the door but the GHOST has gone. HE shakes his head and crosses C to FLOGGEM.]* Here. *[HE gives him the dustpan. There are three heavy knocks. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM freeze and slowly look at each other.]* W-What was that?
- FLOGGEM I think it's my knees! *[Another three knocks.]* I don't like this. Let's get out of here.
- WHIPPEM But we have to get this room ready or the Sheriff will have us thrown into the dungeon.
- FLOGGEM I'd rather have that than be frightened to death by ghoulies and ghosties!
- WHIPPEM Well you go if you like. I'm not scared of anything. *[Another loud knock. WHIPPEM rushes to the door L and opens it. NURSE stands there with a mop and bucket. The mop is held so it covers her face. WHIPPEM screams, rushes back to FLOGGEM and clings to him.]* Help! Help!
- FLOGGEM That's not a ghost. It's only an old mop! *[HE crosses to the door and takes the mop. HE sees the NURSE and screams.]*
- NURSE What is the matter with you two? *[SHE crosses into the room.]*
- FLOGGEM We thought you were a gō ò ò
- WHIPPEM *[Slapping a hand over FLOGGEM'S mouth.]* We thought you were someone else.
- NURSE Well I've come to give you a hand to get the Babes room ready.
- FLOGGEM That's very kind of you. We'd just leave you to it.
- WHIPPEM Yes. See you later. *[THEY back towards the door L.]*
- NURSE Just a minute. I'm not doing all this on my own. Now go and get the sheets to make up the bed.
- FLOGGEM Sheets?
- NURSE Yes, you know. Those big white things you sleep on.
- WHIPPEM Ah yes, they'd be in the laundry. We'd get them. *[THEY bolt for the door and exit.]*

- NURSE What a strange pair. Well I'd make a start by mopping the floor. *[SHE gets the mop and bucket and starts to work. The chest lid opens and a SKELETON or GHOST looks out. The audience should react to this and there now follows an "it's behind you" sequence. This can be whatever the set allows for movement and hiding. It ends with the SKELETON exiting through the door L. NURSE asks the audience where it has gone and when she opens the door FLOGGEM and WHIPPEN are standing there with the sheets.]* Oh!
- WHIPPEN Everything all right Nurse Jollop?
- NURSE Yes couldn't be better. I've finished mopping the floor. Now you can make the bed.
- FLOGGEM Right. *[THEY cross to the bed putting the sheets on the chest. THEY take the first sheet and place it on the bed. It disappears through the back wall. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEN don't see this happen.]*
- WHIPPEN We've done that, Nurse.
- NURSE Let me see. Have you done hospital corners? *[SHE crosses to bed and sees there is no sheet.]* What are you messing about at?
- FLOGGEM But it was there.
- NURSE *[Picking up the second sheet.]* Here, do it properly this time. *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEN lay the sheet. The same thing happens.]*
- WHIPPEN All done.
- NURSE What are you talking about? There are no sheets. My Babes can't sleep in a bed with no sheets; they'd catch their deaths! Let me see if there are any in here. *[SHE crosses to the door UC and opens it. The HEADLESS FIGURE OF SIR WILFRED THE WOEBEGONE stands there in a white light holding his head under his cloak. NURSE looks past it then shuts the door.]* Nothing in there. *[SHE does a 'take' and opens the door again. HEADLESS has gone. SHE slowly turns to look at the audience and mimes "Was there something there?" The audience reacts. SHE crosses back and shuts the door. HEADLESS is standing behind it.]* We must find some sheets from somewhere. What about in here? *[SHE points to the door R.]*
- FLOGGEM I shouldn't go in there if I were you.
- NURSE Why ever not?
- WHIPPEN Because all you'd find in there is a *õ õ* *[Gulps.]* is a *õ õ*
- NURSE *[Opening the door R and finding some sheets.]* Sheets!
- F & W What??
- [HEADLESS has walked down to stand L of FLOGGEM and WHIPPEN.]*

- NURSE        I have found the sheets.
- WHIPPEN      *[To FLOGGEM.] She has found the sheets!*
- FLOGGEM      *[To HEADLESS.] She has found the sheets! [HE does a 'take' and runs off into the cupboard.]*
- NURSE        *[Calling after him.] It's all right. I don't want any more. [To WHIPPEN.] Now then, help me to make the bed.*
- WHIPPEN      Right. *[To HEADLESS.] Excuse me. [HE does a 'take' and runs into the cupboard shutting the door. NURSE crosses to R of the bed. HEADLESS crosses to L of it.]*
- NURSE        Now, I'll pass this side to you. *[SHE passes one side of the sheet to HEADLESS. THEY raise the sheet so it billows out as they bring it down. BOTH smooth the sheet out and come face to face. NURSE stares at him then screams and runs to the door L.]*
- HEADLESS        *[HE speaks as though suffering from a head cold.] Don't go please!*
- NURSE        Who said that?
- HEADLESS     I did.
- NURSE        How? *[HEADLESS brings his head from under his cloak and operates the mouth.]*
- HEADLESS        It's quite simple once you get the hang of it.
- NURSE        Oh you poor dear.
- HEADLESS     I'm Sir Wilfred the Woebegone.
- NURSE        And I'm Nurse Jemima Jollop. *[THEY shake hands.]* But you really shouldn't go around frightening people like that.
- HEADLESS     I don't get much of a chance these days. No one seems to come down this way anymore.
- NURSE        How long have you been here?
- HEADLESS     Oh about three hundred years.
- NURSE        And you just wander around these old corridors?
- HEADLESS     Yes and they're terribly draughty. *[HE sneezes.]*
- NURSE        Oh here let me give you a hand. *[SHE takes out a handkerchief and holds it to his nose while he blows.]*
- HEADLESS     Thank you. It's nice to have someone to talk to. Usually people run away screaming when they see me . and it does get very lonely around here.

NURSE Well don't you worry. I'm here now and I'll soon cheer you up.

DUET . NURSE AND HEADLESS

*[At the end of the number HEADLESS exits through the door UC with the NURSE waving to him. The BABES run on from L.]*

JACK Oh nurse, there you are. We've been looking for you everywhere.

JILL Who were you talking to?

NURSE Oh a very nice man. A very, very nice man! He quite lost his head over me! Anyway, what do you think of your new room?

JACK Oh we don't want to sleep in here. *[SHERIFF enters and hears this.]*

SHERIFF What was that?

JILL No uncle, we found a much better room in the East Wing. It's got masses of toys

JACK and games.

JILL And it's bright and cheerful.

JACK Not like this dingy old room.

SHERIFF My old nursery. You found my old nursery. *[Aside.]* Curse them.

NURSE Well that sounds perfect. Save you the trouble and expense of fixing this place up. Come on children, let's go and look at it. *[THEY start out L.]* Oh you better tell *[Comedy couple name.]* not to bother doing any more in here.

SHERIFF Where are they?

NURSE *[Pointing vaguely in the direction of the cupboard.]* In that cupboard I think. *[SHE exits with the BABES.]*

SHERIFF *[Thinking she means the door UC.]* In that cupboard? Shirking their duties again, no doubt. Those lazy good for nothings. I'll show them. *[HE opens the door UC. HEADLESS is standing there.]*

HEADLESS Oh hello.

SHERIFF Good day to you. *[HE does a 'take' and with a cry, faints on the bed. The lights blackout and the scene changes to.....]*

SCENE 4 THE LONG CORRIDOR IN NOTTINGHAM CASTLE

*[As scene 2. FLOGGEM runs on. WHIPPEM follows and calls.]*

- WHIPPEM Floggem, slow down.
- FLOGGEM But that ghost ~~d~~ catch us!
- WHIPPEM It ~~s~~ not followed us down here.
- FLOGGEM Oh it was awful. Big and ~~a~~rrible with no head!
- WHIPPEM Well it ~~s~~ gone now.
- FLOGGEM I ~~d~~ tell you something. I ~~m~~ not going back there, I don't care what the Sheriff says.
- WHIPPEM But he wants the room getting ready.
- FLOGGEM I don't care I tell you. And I ~~d~~ tell him too.
- WHIPPEM What ~~d~~ you tell him? *[The SHERIFF enters. FLOGGEM doesn't notice him.]*
- FLOGGEM I ~~d~~ say: ~~%~~ook here mister Sheriff, I ~~m~~ not going back to that West Wing even if you threaten to put me on the rack, hang draw and quarter me or throw me in the dungeon+.
- WHIPPEM Are you going to say all that? To the Sheriff?
- FLOGGEM I certainly am. I ~~m~~ not scared of him, the big bully. Let him do what he likes. *[To the SHERIFF.]* I ~~d~~ tell him. *[Does a 'take'.]*
- SHERIFF Tell me what?
- FLOGGEM Er ~~õ~~ ~~õ~~ ~~õ~~ the room. All finished.
- WHIPPEM Yes, we ~~y~~e cleaned it from top to bottom.
- FLOGGEM Ready for the Babes.
- WHIPPEM They ~~d~~ love it.
- SHERIFF *[Quietly.]* Shut up.
- FLOGGEM Took us all day it did. Worked very hard, didn't we?
- WHIPPEM Oh yes, very hard.
- SHERIFF *[Bellowing.]* I said, ~~%~~shut up!+There has been a change of plan. Those Babes won't be sleeping in the West Wing after all.
- FLOGGEM Oh?
- SHERIFF So ~~l~~y'e got to find another way to get rid of them. Now let me think.

- [HE walks around the stage in thought. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM follow him. HE suddenly stops and turns. WHIPPEM bumps into FLOGGEM who falls.] Ha ha!*
- WHIPPEM Ha, ha!
- FLOGGEM *[Getting up.]* Ha, ha!
- SHERIFF I've got it.
- WHIPPEM He's got it.
- FLOGGEM I don't want it.
- SHERIFF A picnic. All horrible little brats love picnics. We'd take them deep into Sherwood Forest for a pleasant little afternoon picnic and while I keep that old battleaxe of a nurse busy, you put something into their drinks. We'd say they ate some poisonous berries - an unfortunate accident. They will finally be out of my hair for good.
- FLOGGEM Where are we going to get poison from?
- SHERIFF You leave that to me. I know someone who can conjure up a concoction. *[HE looks off.]* Quick, they're coming. Go down to the kitchen and tell cook to prepare a hamper for tomorrow afternoon.
- WHIPPEM Right boss.
- FLOGGEM Can we have sherbet dip? I love the way you suck up the sherbet and it goes all fizzy in your mouth.
- SHERIFF Get out of here. *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM exit L as the BABES and NURSE enters R.]* Ah just the people I've been looking for. Ever since you arrived I've been racking my brain, trying to think of something to celebrate your arrival in Nottingham. And I've thought of the very thing. A picnic.
- JACK A picnic! Oh great.
- JILL I love picnics.
- NURSE Oh so do I. Can we have sherbet dips? I love the way you suck up the sherbet
- SHERIFF Yes, yes and it goes all fizzy. I know. *[HE smiles.]* You can have anything you like.
- JACK When are we going?
- SHERIFF Tomorrow afternoon. I thought we'd go into Sherwood Forest. There's a picturesque walk I know. *[To NURSE.]* We could go for a little stroll and look at the flora and fauna.
- NURSE Are they coming as well?
- SHERIFF Have you ever walked down by the bulrushes?

- NURSE No, but I was once in a field where the cowslips and a right mess it made of my new shoes. *[SHE lifts her feet as though standing in a cow pat.]*
- SHERIFF I'm sure we'll have a good time. It'll be a day to remember. Ha ha ha!
- NURSE Oh I can't wait.  
JACK & JILL Neither can we.
- NURSE I must find something special to wear. I know I'll wear that new frock I bought at last year's sales. I call it my American outfit.
- SHERIFF Why American?
- NURSE One yank and it's off! Come along children.
- SHERIFF Until tomorrow, dear lady.
- JACK & JILL Goodbye uncle. *[NURSE and BABES exit L.]*
- SHERIFF *[Crossing near to the tree.]* Goodbye. You snivelling siblings. Oh tomorrow . . . all my plans will come to fruition. The Babes will be no more and I'll have their inheritance. Now to find Nell Nightshade and get her to make up some poison. Oh nothing can stop me now. *[HE exits, laughing. The tree shakes and the audience reacts. GREENWILLOW enters R.]*
- G/WILLOW What's going on? Have I missed something? *[Ad lib with audience.]* So that's what the Sheriff's evil plan is. Well never fear my friends, I'll keep an eye on things tomorrow, just let me know if you see the Babes in danger. Now look who's here. *[MARION enters looking very sad.]* Poor Maid Marion. She's thinking about that handsome Robin Hood. How she misses him and how she hates having to live in this castle with the Sheriff. Of course, Robin wouldn't dare come here, but perhaps with a little of my magic I can bring them together for a short while. The Sheriff is busy plotting away; those two henchmen are preparing for tomorrow so no one's around to see. And you won't tell anyone, will you boys and girls? *[Audience reaction.]* Here goes. *[SHE makes a pass. There is a lighting effect and ROBIN enters.]*
- ROBIN Marion.
- MARION Robin! How did you get here?
- ROBIN I don't really know! One minute I was talking to Much the Miller and the next thing I'm here with you. *[GREENWILLOW smiles and exits.]*
- MARION But it's so dangerous for you to be in the castle. What if the Sheriff or his men catch you?
- ROBIN Marion, you know I'll take any risk to be with you . . . even for just a few minutes. Oh if only I'd got my lands and my title back, I'd take you home to Locksley Castle. We'd be married in the Great Hall and live

happily together. No more worries, no more hiding and no more Sheriff.

MARION Oh Robin, what dreams you spin. If only it was true.

ROBIN It will be Marion. One day. Believe me.

DUET . ROBIN AND MARION

*[At the end of the number the lights fade and the scene changes to.....]*

SCENE 5 PART OF SHERWOOD FOREST

*[The scene covers half the stage. The rest is for the transformation later. UL is a tree. In front is a log that can be used as a table. The lights come up to find the MERRY MEN on stage. They are enjoying some leisure time while waiting for ROBIN to return.]*

NUMBER . MERRY MEN

*[At the end of the number ALAN-A-DALE looks off stage.]*

ALAN Just a minute men, I see an unwelcome guest coming this way.

LITTLE JOHN *[Looking off.]* Well if it isn't our old adversary the Sheriff of Nottingham.

WILL What's he doing out here all on his own.

TUCK Up to no good, I'd be bound.

ALAN Shall we teach him a lesson for coming into our forest uninvited? *[ALL laugh.]*

LITTLE JOHN Better not. Let's go back to our camp and wait for Robin to return from Nottingham. He may have other plans. *[ALL agree and exit. The SHERIFF enters and looks around to make sure HE is alone. HE calls in a whisper.]*

SHERIFF Nell. Nell where are you? Oh do hurry. They'd be here in a minute. *[HE looks around and crosses towards the tree. As HE goes behind it NELL appears from the other side. SHE crosses in front of the tree as the SHERIFF appears. SHE turns around and they come face to face.]*

NELL *[Right into his face.]* Ahhhh!

SHERIFF *[Waving HIS hand in front of HIS face.]* Oh good grief!

NELL There you are. I've got what you asked for.

SHERIFF Let me see it.

NELL Not so fast. Two crowns I think we agreed. *[SHE holds out HER hand.]*

SHERIFF Two crowns! Never!

NELL Very well, I'd be off. *[SHE turns to go.]*

SHERIFF Wait. *[HE takes out the money.]* You drive a hard bargain.

NELL *[Taking the money.]* I had a good teacher! *[SHE cackles in his face.]*

SHERIFF Give me the poison. *[SHE passes a small bottle to him.]*

NELL Mix this with their drink and they won't taste a thing.

SHERIFF *[Looking at the bottle.]* Splendid. Oh Nell Nightshade, you are deadly. *[THEY both laugh. HE gets it in the face again and abruptly stops.]* Now get out of here before the others arrive.

NELL Bye bye, Silas. Enjoy the forest, but make sure Robin Hood doesn't see you! *[Cackling with laughter SHE exits. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM enter singing. FLOGGEM carries a picnic hamper and WHIPPEM a jug of lemonade.]*

FLOGGEM If you go down to the woods today .

WHIPPEM You're in for a big surprise.

SHERIFF Oi! *[FLOGGEM cries out in surprise and the hamper flies out of HIS hand and is caught by the SHERIFF.]* Will you two stop messing about?

FLOGGEM Sorry boss.

WHIPPEM Sorry boss.

SHERIFF Set out the picnic over there. *[HE points to the log. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM take the hamper and cross to the log. THEY set out the picnic food including the jug of lemonade.]* I want everything to look perfectly natural when that old harpy arrives with the Babes. *[HE crosses to look off.]*

FLOGGEM Look at all this food. Surely they're not going to eat the lot.

WHIPPEM There's enough to feed an army. It makes me hungry just looking at it.

FLOGGEM My stomach's rumbling.

WHIPPEM That's a relief. I thought it was thunder.

FLOGGEM I'm sure they won't miss a few sandwiches. *[THEY each take bites from sandwiches. FLOGGEM tries to get the entire sandwich in his mouth while WHIPPEM takes a swig of Pepsi. As the SHERIFF turns round FLOGGEM puts the half eaten sandwich back on the plate.]*

SHERIFF Ha, I can see them coming along the path. Is everything ready? *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM are unable to speak and both nod THEIR heads vigorously.]* Good. Let me have a look. *[HE crosses to the*

*picnic.*] Splendid. *[HE sees the half eaten sandwiches and picks them up.]* What do you call this?

- FLOGGEM *[Spitting the remnants of the sandwich in his face.]* Salmon sandwich!
- SHERIFF *[Wiping his face and then looking at WHIPPEM.]* And you. What have you got in your mouth? *[WHIPPEM shakes his head vigorously.]* Come on, spit it out. *[And of course he does – all into the SHERIFF'S face.]*
- WHIPPEM Pepsi!
- SHERIFF Why you ò ò *[HE goes to grab them but THEY dash off as the NURSE and the BABES enter from the other side of the stage. The SHERIFF wipes his face with a napkin and regains HIS composure.]* Here we are. Isn't this a lovely spot? It reminds me of the Tales From The Vienna Woods.
- NURSE *[Not very impressed.]* Mmm, more like Tales From The Crypt! We seem to have walked for miles. We would have been better at that clearing on the edge of the forest?
- SHERIFF Oh no, we have to be where no one can find them ò ò I mean us! We don't want plebes plodding through our picnic patch. Besides, don't you think this is more romantic? Let me lead you up that woodland path.
- NURSE I suppose it makes a change from being led up the garden path.
- SHERIFF *[Putting his arm around her waist.]* Just up there is a wandering stream.
- NURSE It's the wandering hands I'm more bothered about.
- JACK Can we get started on the picnic now? I'm famished.
- JILL Look at that chocolate cake. *[BABES cross to the food.]*
- SHERIFF Yes of course children. Eat as much as you like.
- NURSE I think I might just have a nibble. *[SHE crosses and piles the food on a plate.]* Not too much. I have to watch my figure.
- SHERIFF *[Trying to get away.]* But wouldn't you fancy a stroll first. Work up an appetite?
- NURSE I've just walked five miles. I could eat a horse. *[SHE piles on more food.]*
- SHERIFF Oh dear lady, you disappoint me. I was looking forward to being alone with you. Consorting with nature. Meandering through a leafy glade, hand in hand. Watching the birds fly from tree to tree. Listening to the sound of the bullfrog. *[NURSE belches.]*
- NURSE Pardon!

- SHERIFF *[Grabbing her.]* Oh nature has always brought out the animal instinct in me.
- NURSE Down boy. Have you been taking Viagra?
- SHERIFF Oh Mistress Jollop.
- NURSE Here, I'm not a mistress.
- SHERIFF Would you deny this lonely old man a few moments in the company of one so fair? *[HE turns away with a grimace. SHE looks at the food, then at him, then back at the food.]*
- NURSE *[To him.]* Oh go on then. Flattery will get you everywhere.
- SHERIFF *[Leading her off L. His hand on her rear.]* This way.
- NURSE Hey, I'd give you two hours to stop that. *[SHE exits. SHERIFF calls FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM down left.]*
- SHERIFF Psst! *[HE takes out the bottle.]* Two drops of this in their drink will do the trick. Don't fail me this time, or else. *[HE draws his finger across his throat, then exits.]*
- WHIPPEM Come on, let's get it over with.
- FLOGGEM Oh I don't know. I don't think I could kill anyone.
- WHIPPEM What do you mean?
- FLOGGEM Well look at them. We can't kill those sweet little Babes.
- WHIPPEM You heard what the Sheriff said. If we don't *[HE draws his finger over his throat.]*
- FLOGGEM Give me that bottle.
- WHIPPEM I'd keep their attention while you put it in the drink. *[THEY cross up to the BABES.]* Now then children are you enjoying yourselves?
- JACK I'd say. The food's great.
- JILL I'm going to eat and eat until I burst. *[FLOGGEM puts the poison in the pitcher of lemonade.]*
- WHIPPEM That's good. And when you've eaten all you can there's some cool lemonade to wash it down with.
- JACK I love lemonade.
- JILL Me too.
- WHIPPEM Well you'd love this. It's got an extra tang to it. *[To FLOGGEM.]* All done?
- FLOGGEM Yes, I've put the poison

- WHIPPEM *[Clapping his hand over FLOGGEMS mouth.]* ò ò pitcher there with the lemonade. Drink it all up, won't you?
- JACK Yes sir.
- WHIPPEM We're just going for a walk to find the Sheriff. We'll be back shortly. *[THEY cross down by the listening tree.]* There, that's done. Now let's get out of here. I don't want to be around when they're found.
- FLOGGEM Good idea. Bye children.
- WHIPPEM Enjoy yourselves. Ha ha ha! *[THEY exit. The tree starts to shake.]*
- JACK That lemonade does look good. Shall we have some?
- JILL Yes please. *[The tree shakes even more as JACK pours two glasses. Audience reacts. GREENWILLOW enters and freezes the action as the BABES are about to drink.]*
- G/WILLOW Oh I got here just in time. Thank you for calling me. Now, what's been going on? *[Ad lib. With audience.]* So, another wicked plan by the Sheriff. Well this time I'll turn it to the Babes advantage. I'll change the poison into a sleeping potion and while they sleep they will dream of all the happy times spent in their nursery. *[SHE makes a pass. The BABES unfreeze and finish their drink.]*
- JACK *[Yawning.]* Oh I'm feeling tired now.
- JILL *[Also yawning.]* Mmm, me too. Shall we have a sleep under this tree?
- JACK *[Lying down.]* What a good idea.
- JILL Sweet dreams, Jack. *[THEY fall asleep.]*
- G/WILLOW Sweet dreams indeed. For as I work my magic all the evil will be gone and only happiness and joy will surround you while you sleep.

#### TOYLAND BALLET

*[The Ballet can start with any children in the cast dressed as birds and animals. They cover the BABES with leaves. Then the backcloth flies out to reveal a magical land of toys. These can be at the director's discretion and the CHORUS and DANCERS enter as various characters. It must play as though they are in JACK and JILL'S dreams. JACK and JILL join in playing with the toys. Suddenly a wind up toy that looks like the SHERIFF comes to life and tries to frighten the BABES. Another one representing ROBIN HOOD comes to the rescue and saves them as the ballet comes to an end. The back cloth flies back in as dawn breaks and GREENWILLOW moves down stage.]*

And now dear Babes, your real life hero is here to rescue you from the wood.

*[ROBIN and his BAND OF MEN enter and cross to the BABES. THEY wake and run to him.]*

REPRISE OF ROBIN'S FIRST NUMBER

*[ALL move into final picture.]*

CURTAIN

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE 1 NOTTINGHAM GOOSE FAIR

*[The scene is the same as Act 1 Scene 1 with the addition of bunting and stalls selling all kinds of things at the fair. The CHORUS is on with MARION. All the MEN are in ROBIN'S band. They wear disguises, which they will take off later.]*

CHORUS NUMBER (With MARION)

*[At the end of the number MARION and the CHORUS move to the stalls looking at what is on sale. The SHERIFF enters and starts to cross to MARION, but is stopped by NELL who moves out of the crowd.]*

NELL           Silas, you big sexy beast!

SHERIFF       I've told you not to call me that in public.

- NELL Nobody is looking at us. They're all with Marion. She's very popular with everyone. *[With a knowing look at him.]* Unlike some. *[SHE cackles in his face with the usual results.]*
- SHERIFF I don't know what you are talking about.
- NELL May be you should begin ingratiating yourself with the common folk. Then she may look favourably in your direction. *[SHE gives him a dig in the ribs.]*
- SHERIFF Power and wealth is very attractive to a young girl. Marion will see this in time and realise where her heart truly lies.
- NELL Perhaps I should mix up a love potion to help the process along. For the usual fee of course.
- SHERIFF No need. The road to true love is well travelled.
- NELL But in your case there're a few potholes! *[SHE cackles again.]*
- SHERIFF Get out of here.
- NELL Bye, bye, Silas. *[HE scowls at her.]* I mean my lord Sheriff. *[SHE exits, cackling. The SHERIFF crosses to MARION.]*
- SHERIFF Marion, my dear, are you having a good time at the fair?
- MARION Yes thank you my lord, but I can't find the Babes anywhere. I promised to take them on the roundabouts, but no one has seen them since they went on that picnic with you yesterday.
- SHERIFF *[Nonchalantly.]* Oh they'll turn up somewhere. You know what children are like, always disappearing. Don't worry your pretty little head over such trifles.
- MARION But it is a worry. Nurse is out looking for them now. *[With suspicion.]* She thought they had returned home with your two men who are also nowhere to be found.
- SHERIFF *[Irritated.]* Why should I be bothered about a couple of pesky children. er, I mean today I have a lot of important things to attend to. The archery contest will be starting shortly. I was hoping my dear, that I may carry your kerchief as a token of your support?
- MARION *[Flustered.]* Oh my lord, would that be fair?
- SHERIFF Fair? Fair? What's fair got to do with it?
- MARION So many friends of mine are taking part, they might feel I'm taking sides.
- SHERIFF Friends? What friends?

- MARION Well there's John over there. *[SHE waves to JOHN.]* And Alan. *[SHE waves.]* And Will. *[SHE waves.]* And Tuck. *[SHE waves. TUCK makes a sign of the cross.]*
- SHERIFF Tuck? What a ridiculous name. But they are just peasants. I'm sure to win. I'm the best bowman in these parts.
- MARION Really my lord? Are you so confident?
- SHERIFF Of course. And after I've won, perhaps you and I could share a celebratory supper together. I have a special proposition to put to you. *[HE takes her hand and kisses it. SHE shudders.]*
- MARION Iō ō | ō ō
- SHERIFF Now I won't take no for an answer.
- NURSE *[Off.]* Coo-ee! Sheriff. Where are you?
- SHERIFF Oh no! What does that weather beaten old buzzard want now?
- MARION I see one of your many admirers approaching. I'll leave you alone.
- SHERIFF But Marionō ō *[NURSE enters.]*
- NURSE Ah there you are, you slippery Silas, you! *[MARION and CHORUS exit.]*
- SHERIFF *[Calling.]* Marionō ō *[To NURSE.]* Good day, madam.
- NURSE Madam? *[Catching hold of his arm.]* But Silas, why so formal? Yesterday you called me your little Jemmy Wemmy and squeezed me under the portcullis.
- SHERIFF *[Disentangling himself from her.]* That was yesterday!
- NURSE But can't we carry on from where we left off?
- SHERIFF No madam, we can not carry on anywhere. I have more important things to attend to.
- NURSE Well I hope one of those important things is finding my precious Babes. We left them with those two idiots of yours and I've not set eyes on them since.
- [FLOGGEM and WHIPPEN enter.]*
- SHERIFF There they are. Excuse me a moment. *[HE crosses to them.]* Well, what happened?
- FLOGGEM We did like you told us.
- WHIPPEN We left them drinking the lemonade.
- SHERIFF Excellent. They're finally out of my hair. Did you make sure they were well and truly dead?

WHIPPEM No, we scarpered in case that Robin Hood and his men found us.

SHERIFF Robin Hood. Of course, that gives me an idea. I'd say he's kidnapped the Babes. It will turn everyone against him. That should kill two birds with one stone.

FLOGGEM I thought we were supposed to kill the Babes?

WHIPPEM Oh shut up.

SHERIFF Get out of here while I break the tragic news to Vera Duckworth . *[Or some TV character.]* over there. *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM exit. The SHERIFF starts to moan.]* Oh no! Tell me it's not true!

NURSE What? What's happened?

SHERIFF Oh it's too terrible. How could he have done such a thing?

NURSE What? Who?

SHERIFF *[With mock anguish.]* I can't. I can't say it.

NURSE *[Grabbing him and shaking him.]* Say it! Say it!

SHERIFF Madam please! You'd crease the clobber.

NURSE I'd crease something else if you don't tell me.

SHERIFF The Babes! Those dear sweet Babesō ò ò ò ò

NURSE What . has . happened?

SHERIFF Kidnapped - by that fiend Robin Hood!

NURSE KIDNAPPED!!!

SHERIFF And by now probablyō ò ò ò ò

NURSE No! It can't be. I mean he wouldn't. He's a kind, considerate man. He wouldn't hurt a fly.

SHERIFF Ha! That's what he wants you to think. He'd more than likely be demanding a ransom.

NURSE Then you'd have to pay it.

SHERIFF What? Out of the question. I'm afraid they're doomed.

NURSE *[Running around, shouting.]* Oh no! Help! Somebody help! *[MARION enters.]*

MARION Nurse whatever's the matter?

NURSE Him . that outlaw. He's kidnapped my two darling Babes.

MARION      What?

SHERIFF      I told you he was no good.

MARION      But that's impossible. Robin would never do anything so cruel.

NURSE        *[To the SHERIFF.]* You must go after him and rescue them.

SHERIFF      Me? Are you mad? Besides I've got an archery contest to win . er . I mean organise. *[HE exits.]*

NURSE        Oh Marion, what's to be done?

MARION      Now you mustn't worry. Robin would never harm the Babes. It's probably a trick of the Sheriff's so he can inherit their fortune.

NURSE        Do you mean that's why that slippery, slimy, no good's No wonder he wanted to get me away from the Babes at the picnic. And to think I nearly let him take advantage of me on the turrets!

MARION      I'll try and find out if Robin knows anything. *[ROBIN enters.]*

ROBIN         Knows anything about what?

MARION      Robin, thank goodness you're here. The Sheriff has done something terrible. The Babes's's's

ROBIN         's's's are safe and sound and at my hideout in Sherwood Forest.

MARION      There, you see.

NURSE        Oh thank you. But where did you find them?

ROBIN         Asleep in the forest. The Sheriff's men must have left them there to perish.

NURSE        Oh it's all my fault. If I hadn't let him talk me into going for a walk . and flattering me, this would never have happened. I'm just a foolish old woman. *[SHE sobs. Big sobs.]*

MARION      There, there. Everything will be all right.

ROBIN         You must both come to Sherwood Forest with me. If the Sheriff finds out what you know, your lives could be in danger. We'll leave later today.

NURSE        But why not now?

ROBIN         Because I have an archery contest to win.

MARION      Robin, you're not going to compete against the Sheriff?

ROBIN         Indeed I am. And I shall win. Marion, I would deem it an honour if I could carry your kerchief as a token of your support.

- MARION *[Giving it to him.]* Of course Robin.
- NURSE *[Making up to ROBIN.]* You can carry mine too, if you like. I've got it up my knicker leg somewhere. *[SHE starts to look for it.]*
- ROBIN Erō ã perhaps another time.
- FANFARE
- [CHORUS enters.]*
- MARION Quick Robin, hide yourself.
- ROBIN I have a disguise over there. I'll be back to claim my prize. *[HE exits as FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM enter carrying a target. The SHERIFF follows them on carrying a bow and quiver of arrows.]*
- SHERIFF And now good people, as promised, to round off the annual Goose Fair festivities . a grand archery contest. All those wishing to take part step forward. *[JOHN, WILL and ALAN step DS.]* Here I have the bow and quiver of arrows. *[Aside to FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM.]* I have altered the flight feathers so these arrows won't fly straight. Then when it's my turn this one . *[HE shows an arrow concealed in his coat.]* . will hit the bulls eye.
- FLOGGEM Isn't that cheating?
- SHERIFF Yes . and this is beating! *[HE hits FLOGGEM.]* Now take the target over there. *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM exit L with the target.]* Now dear populace, who is first?
- WILL Me my lord.
- SHERIFF Here you are my good man. *[HE gives WILL the bow and an arrow.]* The firing line is over there. *[HE points off R. WILL exits. ALL look off R. There is a "Whoosh!" sound and ALL look off L.]* Oh dear, bad luck. *[WILL re-enters as do FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM with the target. The arrow is in the outer ring.]* Next. *[ALAN takes the bow and exits. Same business.]* Just missed. Better luck next time. Next. *[JOHN takes the bow and exits. Same business.]*
- FLOGGEM *[Off.]* Owwwwww! *[This time when they bring the target on the arrow is sticking in FLOGGEM'S rear.]*
- SHERIFF Tut, tut! What a pity. Now it's my turn I think. *[Murmurs from the CROWD.]* I must say I'm a little nervous shooting against such splendid bowmen. *[HE takes the bow and exits R pulling the arrow from his coat. Same business. SHERIFF re-enters. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM carry on the target with the arrow in the bull.]* I won! I won!
- TUCK Not so fast my lord. A fellow brother from a distant order is staying with us for a while and would like to take part. *[ROBIN enters from upstage disguised as a monk.]*

- SHERIFF Oh very well, but I don't see how he can beat me. *[ROBIN exit DR, FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM exit DL. Same business. Gasps from the CROWD.]*
- TUCK Well, would you look at that. *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM bring the target back on with ROBIN'S arrow splitting the SHERIFF'S in two.]*
- SHERIFF I don't believe it. You there, come here. *[ROBIN enters.]* Who taught you to shoot like that?
- ROBIN The same person who taught Robin Hood. *[HE throws off his disguise and draws his sword.]* And now my lord Sheriff, I'll take my prize money. *[ROBIN takes the moneybag from the SHERIFF as the CROWD cheers. MEN throw off their disguises and draw swords.]* Back to Sherwood men. Nurse, Marion, you'll come with us and be reunited with the Babes who are safe and well.
- SHERIFF *[Aghast.]* What?
- ROBIN Farewell Sheriff and thank you for an excellent days sport. *[ROBIN, NURSE, MARION and MEN exit UL. ALL cheer.]*
- SHERIFF Quick, after them. They mustn't get away. I want my prize money back. *[SHERIFF, FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM bump into each other in a bungled exit. The lights fade and the scene changes to.....]*

## SCENE 2 THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN

*[Front cloth. There is a sign post on stage right that reads 'Nottingham' pointing L and 'Sherwood Forest' pointing R. This is a trick sign that can be turned to face the opposite way. NELL enters down left.]*

- NELL I've helped Silas get rid of the Babes and so their inheritance will become his, now I want him to help me. I want my revenge on the Locksley family . and that means putting an end to Robin Hood and his do goodways. *[Fingering the necklace.]* With the help of my powerful ancestors I've found out where his hide-out is in Sherwood Forest and I'm going to point the Sheriff in that direction. *[SHE crosses near to the tree and the sign.]* Very soon that no-good outlaw and his band will be rotting in the deepest dungeon of Nottingham Castle. *[SHE cackles with laughter and the tree begins to shake. The audience calls out – NELL crosses left as GREENWILLOW enters right. NELL can't see GREENWILLOW, but senses someone is there.]*
- G/WILLOW Well, what goes on! *[SHE sees NELL.]* Ah, it's nasty old Nell. No doubt up to her old tricks.
- NELL *[Looking around.]* Someone's here. I can sense it. Mustn't say too much. Even the trees have ears! I'll go and find the Sheriff. I can feel big changes in the air. Today will be momentous for some of us. *[She cackles and exits left.]*

- G/WILLOW *[Looking at NELL leaving.]* It will indeed, but not in the way you think! *[To the audience.]* At least the Babes are safe and will soon be reunited with their nurse. But the troubles aren't over yet. The Sheriff is even more determined to catch Robin, especially now he has Marion as well as the Babes. And with Nell's help he could succeed. So if you see him coming this way, call me and we'll try and put him off the trail. He'll not be far away. *[SHE exits as ROBIN and MARION enter L.]*
- ROBIN Quick Marion, I have some horses hidden at the blacksmiths. We can ride to my hideout.
- MARION Where's nurse Jemima? I thought she was following us.
- ROBIN She was.
- NURSE *[Off.]* Yoo-hoo! Wait for me. *[SHE enters with bottles of 'tonic' sticking out from her apron.]* I just had to pick up some more tonics. I can't go anywhere without it.
- ROBIN Come along. We must get away before the Sheriff catches up with us.
- NURSE Where are all your men?
- ROBIN They've gone another way to cause a diversion.
- NURSE Ohhh, it's just like a James Bond movie! Have we got a car waiting that turns into a plane?
- ROBIN No, just a plain old horse.
- SHERIFF *[Off.]* This way, I'm sure they went this way.
- MARION The Sheriff!
- ROBIN Quick, let's hide over here. *[HE points to the audience.]*
- NURSE *[To the audience.]* You'll help us hide from the Sheriff, won't you? *[Reaction. ROBIN, MARION and NURSE go into the audience and hide SR of audience side. SHERIFF, FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM enter L. Tree starts to shake.]*
- SHERIFF They must have come this way. *[GREENWILLOW enters R as the audience call.]*
- FLOGGEM But I'm sure I saw them leaving town by the main road.
- SHERIFF That's what he wants you to think. I know Robin Hood has his devious ways.
- WHIPPEM We've been Robin Hood-winked!
- SHERIFF Oh do shut up.
- FLOGGEM Where are we? I've never been down this way before.

- SHERIFF There's a sign over there. *[GREENWILLOW makes a 'pass' and the sign turns round. SHERIFF, FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM cross to it.]* That can't be right. We've just come that way.
- FLOGGEM But that's what it says: 'Sherwood Forest'.
- SHERIFF Yes, thank you. I can read!
- WHIPPEM Look, there are some people over there. Let's ask them. *[ALL THREE cross off the stage to the SL side of the audience and ad lib. asking where Robin is. GREENWILLOW makes a 'pass' and the sign turns back. Unseen by the others, ROBIN, MARION and NURSE run off stage R. After some time the SHERIFF looks up at the sign.]*
- SHERIFF I'm going to check that sign again. *[As HE crosses back up onto the stage GREENWILLOW changes the sign again.]* It's definitely this way. *[HE points off L.]* Come on you two. *[HE exits L. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM cross back to the stage.]*
- WHIPPEM Coming! *[GREENWILLOW changes the sign and exits with a 'thumbs up' to the audience.]*
- FLOGGEM Oh I'm worn out with all this dashing about.
- WHIPPEM So am I. You know Floggem, I don't think I'm cut out for this sort of life.
- FLOGGEM Me neither. Working for the Sheriff is no fun.
- WHIPPEM And look at the wages!
- FLOGGEM What wages?
- WHIPPEM Well erō ò ò ò
- FLOGGEM Do you mean to say you get paid?
- WHIPPEM Only because I'm older than you are. Besides, he says he can't afford a lot because Robin Hood keeps stealing his money.
- FLOGGEM Robin Hood. That's who we should be working for. Everybody likes him.
- WHIPPEM You're right. Let's chuck this job in and go and join his band.
- FLOGGEM Ooooh! I've always wanted to be in a band. Can I play the drums? We could be the next *[name of popular band.]*
- WHIPPEM Not that kind of a band you idiot.
- FLOGGEM Oh, sorry. But it would be fun to be famous.
- [THEY ad lib. into a song that copies a current pop band style.]*

DUET - FLOGGEM AND WHIPPEM

*[At the end of the song the lights fade and the scene changes to.....]*

SCENE 3 ROBIN HOOD'S HIDE-OUT IN SHERWOOD FOREST

*[A full forest scene. There is an open fire up stage with a tripod. A big bowl is hanging from it. There are various plates of food and some mugs for drinking. ALL except NURSE are on as the scene opens enjoying a friendly fight with sticks between LITTLE JOHN and the other MEN. LITTLE JOHN beats them all and then JACK picks up the stick and wants to have a go. Someone trips LITTLE JOHN and JACK ends up the winner. EVERYONE cheers.]*

- WILL *[Looking off.]* Robin, look over there. Aren't they the Sheriff's two bungling henchmen?
- ROBIN Why so they are. Let's hide and give them a real Sherwood welcome. *[ALL laugh and hide behind trees and bushes. FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM enter.]*
- WHIPPEM *[Looking around.]* Do you think we're there yet?
- FLOGGEM No . we're here.
- WHIPPEM Yes, but as we're here . do you think we're there?
- FLOGGEM How can we be here and there?
- WHIPPEM Oh what's the use of talking to you? *[HE calls out.]* Hello?
- ROBIN *[Off. Like an echo.]* Hello!
- FLOGGEM *[Shaking.]* Did you hear that?
- WHIPPEM Was it an echo?
- ROBIN *[Off.]* Was it an echo?
- WHIPPEM That's what I said. *[HE looks at FLOGGEM.]* Don't repeat everything I say.
- ROBIN *[Off.]* Don't repeat everything I say.
- WHIPPEM You said that without moving your lips.
- FLOGGEM I didn't say anything. *[EVERYONE starts to creep on.]*
- WHIPPEM Well if you didn't *õ õ õ* who did?
- ROBIN Greetings!
- FLOGGEM *[Leaping into WHIPPEM'S arms.]* Ahhhhhh!

- ROBIN           And what brings you two so deep into the forest . and without your master?
- WHIPPEM       *[Putting FLOGGEM down.]* W-well sir, Mr Hood. You see
- FLOGGEM       We . er want to join your band.
- WHIPPEM       Yes. He wants to play the drums! Er I mean we left the Sheriff because he's mean and nasty
- FLOGGEM       and doesn't pay any wages!
- WHIPPEM       And everyone likes you because you're kind
- FLOGGEM       and you do pay wages!
- WHIPPEM       Yes. No! *[HE hits FLOGGEM.]*
- ROBIN           Well this is an interesting turn of events.
- TUCK           Be careful Robin, this may be a trap.
- ROBIN           What do you think we should do? *[To the audience.]* Shall we let them join us? *[Audience reaction. Ad lib.]* Very well, if my friends think you've turned over a new leaf, then you're welcome here in Sherwood. Tuck, give them something to eat and drink. *[TUCK takes them up stage to the fire.]*
- MARION         Look Robin, someone else approaches.
- ALAN           It looks like an old man who has lost his way.
- LITTLE JOHN   You don't think it's the Sheriff?
- ROBIN           I don't think so, but be on your guard. *[ALL MEN draw swords. A STRANGER enters. HE wears a cloak with a hood. ALL surround him.]* Greetings good sir. How may we be of help?
- STRANGER       I    *[HE faints.]*
- MARION         Robin, quick . he is ill.
- ROBIN           Bring some water here. *[WILL brings a cup of water.]*
- STRANGER       *[Reviving, but still weak.]* Thank you. I have been walking these past five days and seem to have lost my way. Where am I?
- ROBIN           You are in Sherwood Forest near the town of Nottingham.
- STRANGER       Nottingham? Then I am near my journeys' end.
- JACK           *[Running to him.]* And this is Robin Hood, the famous outlaw! He rescued us from our wicked uncle the Sheriff!!

- JILL Jack shh! It's supposed to be a secret!
- STRANGER Robin Hood eh? I've heard stories of your good deeds to help the poor.
- ROBIN All highly exaggerated I assure you.
- STRANGER That's as maybe, but I am already grateful for the kindness you have shown me.
- ROBIN Well sir, you are welcome to remain with us until you are fit and well enough to continue your journey.
- TUCK *[Bringing a plate of food.]* And you are just in time for our special entertainment. Little John, is everything ready?
- LITTLE JOHN Indeed it is. Ladies and gentlemen . fellow outlaws. *[ALL laugh.]* To celebrate the safe return of the Babes, that star of stage, screen and operating theatre will now perform a terpsichorean act of astounding versatility! Friends, I give you . and are there any takers? . Nurse Jemima Jollop! *[NURSE enters to great applause.]*
- NURSE Thank you. I would now like to do for you a little number entitled: ~~She~~ left her electric blanket on and now she's the toast of the town!  
  
SONG . NURSE  
  
*[This can be anything the director wishes to put in. NURSE can use MEN in the number or the whole company could join in. SHE must always act as the 'star' of the song. At the end there is great applause. Suddenly NELL appears and they all cower away from her.]*
- NELL Enjoy this merriment while you can Robin Hood. Your days of freedom are over.
- WILL Who is this, Robin.
- ROBIN It's old Nell Nightshade. My father banished her for performing evil witchcraft.
- LITTLE JOHN I'd give her witchcraft. *[HE advances on NELL who makes a pass that knocks his staff out of his hand.]* How did that happen?
- NELL *[Showing the necklace.]* The power of my ancestors is always with me. Beware big man, or next time it will be your head that will be knocked off. *[SHE throws her head back and cackles. ALL reel back at the smell of her breath.]* This way Silas. I told you I knew where the hideout was. *[The SHERIFF bursts on with his sword drawn. NELL moves close to the BABES.]*
- SHERIFF At last Robin Hood. *[To FLOGGEM and WHIPPEN.]* Good work men. You managed to track him down as well. Quick, now arrest him.
- FLOGGEM Sorry, we can't do that.

SHERIFF What do you mean?

WHIPPEM We've gone over to the other side.

FLOGGEM Yes, we've just joined his band of hairy men.

WHIPPEM Merry men.

FLOGGEM That too.

ROBIN So you see, my lord Sheriff, I think I have the advantage.

SHERIFF Not so fast outlaw. *[HE points to the BABES.]* Nell. *[SHE grabs the BABES.]* One more step and you know what will happen.

MARION Robin, the Babes.

NURSE Touch one hair of their heads and you'll have me to reckon with!

SHERIFF Oh shut up you shovel mouthed, docklands drab!!

NURSE Oh I love it when he talks dirty.

ROBIN What's the matter Sheriff? Hiding behind two innocent children. Are you too scared to fight me man to man? *[Slaps thigh.]*

SHERIFF Scared? I'll show you who's scared. Draw your sword Robin Hood and let it be a fight to the death.

### FIGHT

*[ROBIN almost wins but is then knocked down by the SHERIFF who holds his sword to ROBIN'S throat.]* Surrender in the name of Prince John.

STRANGER *[Drawing a sword and holding it to the SHERIFF.]* No Sheriff, you surrender in the name of King Richard! *[HE takes off his cloak and hood to reveal himself as KING RICHARD.]*

ALL The king! *[ALL kneel.]*

NELL The king? Leave him to me. *[For a moment SHE releases the BABES. JACK sees his chance and pulls the necklace from her neck.]* Ahhhh! Give it back you brat!

ROBIN Well done Jack.

RICHARD Arise my good people. *[ALL rise except the SHERIFF.]*

ROBIN *[To LITTLE JOHN.]* John, I think we have a secure cage just right for a powerless witch!

LITTLE JOHN We have indeed, Robin. *[HE grabs hold of NELL.]* By your leave, Sire.

*[RICHARD nods in ascent and NELL is dragged away protesting – HER breath making LITTLE JOHN grimace and the OTHERS laugh.]*

- RICHARD I have seen and heard enough to know what has been happening whilst I was away at the Crusades. My brother, the usurper Prince John, has had all powers stripped away from him, so now I shall begin to right the wrongs and eradicate the villainy that he and his followers have wrought on this great land.
- SHERIFF But Sire, it's not me who is the villain. It's him, the outlaw Robin Hood.
- MARION Your Majesty that is not true. Everything Robin has done has been to help your poor but loyal subjects.
- RICHARD My dear Lady Marion, I know you speak the truth for since my return I have heard all about the good deeds of Master Robin Hood.
- SHERIFF Good deeds! Bah!
- RICHARD I have also heard about the high taxes and torture you have inflicted on the people of Nottingham.
- SHERIFF Oh mercy Sire. I was only doing it for the good of the crown.
- RICHARD You were doing it for your own good. There is only one punishment for the likes of you. *[HE draws back his sword.]*
- NURSE *[Stepping forward.]* Oh your mighty magesticals, may I speak?
- RICHARD What is it good nurse?
- NURSE Well, it is true he has been a bad boy and done all those naughty things. And he did try to do away with the Babes. He really does deserve a good slap of the wrist. But perhaps it's because he hasn't had the love and attention that we all need. Perhaps if someone were to take him in hand and teach him how to be good, kind and considerate ò ò
- RICHARD Mmm, you may be right. Maybe we should put him into a medieval delinquent rehabilitation programme. See if some good can come out of this cesspool of evil. But who shall take charge of him?
- NURSE Well Dickie dear, I am a state registered nurse and I have been certified more than once.
- RICHARD Well Sheriff, there hangs your fate.
- FLOGGEM Yes, what's it to be? The sword ò ò ò
- WHIPPEM ò ò ò ò or the broad. *[The SHERIFF looks from RICHARD to the NURSE who flutters her eyes at him, then back to RICHARD. HE then bares his chest ready to have the sword plunged in.]*
- RICHARD Oh take him away! *[FLOGGEM and WHIPPEM haul him up and the NURSE grabs him and drags him off stage. LITTLE JOHN returns.]* As for you Robin Hood, I pardon you and all your men and hereby restore all you lands, possessions and titles. *[ALL cheer.]* One more thing.

Kneel. *[ROBIN kneels.]* I knight you Sir Robin of Locksley, Earl of Huntingdon. *[HE knights ROBIN. More cheers. ROBIN stands.]*

ROBIN Thank you Sire. May I have leave to ask you a favour?

RICHARD You may.

ROBIN It is to ask for the fair Maid Marion's hand in marriage and your blessing.

RICHARD I give it with all my heart. *[ALL cheer. ROBIN and MARION embrace.]*

REPRISE . (Part of ROBIN'S first song.)

*[At the end of the number the lights fade and the scene changes to.....]*

#### SCENE 4 ON THE WAY HOME

*[Front cloth. GREENWILLOW enters R.]*

G/WILLOW Oh I do like a happy ending. Robin and Marion are going to be married and will live at Locksley Castle. All the outlaws have been pardoned, Nell has been banished again and that Sheriff has got to learn to change his ways! The Babes are once more safe and sound, so there's not much more for me to do. But before I go I would just like to say thank you for keeping an eye on the tree and giving me a helping hand. I would never have managed it without you. And you never know, if you are in these parts in the future, we may bump into each other again. So until then . bye bye. *[SHE waves and exits as the NURSE and SHERIFF enter L.]*

NURSE Here we are Silas dear . officially betrothed. Aren't you happy?

SHERIFF Delirious!

NURSE There, you see . I knew you'd get use to it once the shock had worn off. But one thing I must insist on is that we don't do our courting around the walls of the castle. It's so draughty. The other night when we were out there the wind was whistling round me ramparts and blowing up me buttress. *[SHE puts her bust straight.]* A girl could catch her death.

SHERIFF *[Aside.]* One could hope!

NURSE Now I've thought of a splendiferous way for you to make amends for all the naughty things you did to Robin and Marion. I've written a little song for you and me to sing at their wedding.

SHERIFF Me . sing for Robin Hood? You've got to be joking.

NURSE It's not difficult. I'd help you. My voice has been strained you know.

SHERIFF It's a pity the rest of you hasn't!

*[THEY ad lib. into .....*

SONG SHEET

*[At the end of the number THEY exit as the lights fade and the scene changes to.....*

SCENE 5 THE GREAT HALL AT LOCKESLEY CASTLE

*[There is a dance in progress. At the end of it the CHORUS GIRLS take their bow. ROBIN'S BAND OF MEN run on and take their bow and then the PRINCIPALS in the following order:*

KING RICHARD  
NELL  
GREENWILLOW  
JACK & JILL  
FLOGGEM & WHIPPEN  
SHERIFF  
NURSE

NURSE Three cheers for Sir Robin and Lady Marion.

*[ALL cheer as ROBIN and MARION enter and take their bow.]*

RICHARD And so our story's over,

G/WILLOW Our merry tale is done.  
 FLOGGEM We hope that you've enjoyed yourselves  
 WHIPPEM Each and every one.  
 MARION All has ended happily  
 ROBIN As all good pantos should.  
 NURSE And so goodnight from me ò ò  
 SHERIFF ò ò and me,  
 NELL ò ò and me. [*SHE cackles and ALL reel.*]  
 JACK & JILL And us the Babes in the Wood

*[ALL wave goodnight.]*

FINAL CHORUS

CURTAIN

## APPENDIX

In the original version of *Babes in the Wood* I wrote a song for the opening which may be used if you so wish.

The lyrics are printed here and the music is available separately from NODA.

**Please note that this song may only be performed when using this script and may not be interpolated into any other version. Permission to use the song must be obtained before rehearsals commence.**

### NOTTINGHAM

CHORUS: Nottingham, Nottingham  
 Where we live, work and play.  
 Times are rough  
 And hard enough,  
 Still we get through each day.  
 Working from sun up to pay for food  
 We're honest and hardworking folk.  
 But the Sheriff will take

Every penny we make.  
 What a despicable bloke!  
 But here we'll stay in Nottingham  
 Never getting us down.  
 All the while  
 We'll wear a smile,  
 Here in Nottingham Town.

MAN: (Spoken) Never mind about the Sheriff. Don't forget there's good old Robin Hood. Him and his Merry Men are always near in times of trouble.

WOMAN: That's right. I don't know what we'd ever do without him.

ALL: (ad lib.) Yes, she's right. Good old Robin.

(Singing.) Always lending a helping hand,  
 He'll be there to the end.  
 With all of his might  
 He will fight for what's right.  
 He's such a dependable friend.

So here we'll stay in Nottingham  
 Never getting us down.  
 All the while  
 We'll wear a smile,  
 Here in Nottingham .  
 Good old Nottingham .  
 Here in Nottingham Town.

**c 2007**