

# **ROBIN HOOD**

**a new musical**

**Music, Lyrics and Book by Tobin James Mueller**



# ACT ONE

## PROLOGUE: "WHAT KIND OF WORLD?"

### Scene 1

The curtain opens during the **OVERTURE** and an unscripted scene begins. We see a busy Saxon marketplace, circa 1200 A.D., in which Norman soldiers prowl and Norman aristocrats dominate. Saxons are busy selling and serving; Normans are busy buying and being served. Characters, such as TOM FLETCHER and GIL SMITH, apply their trades (fletching arrows and tending the blacksmith shop). Perhaps others sell bread, baskets, linen, fire-wood, fruit and vegetables. The SHERIFF and special GUARDS make a grand entrance. The SHERIFF is followed everywhere by his abused and pitiable STOOL BOY, a child or dwarf who drags a stool around on which the SHERIFF might stand, so that his head might be higher than all others present. They are followed by the real evil behind the story, LORD GISBOURNE. GISBOURNE is at the top of the Norman pecking order. He might take an apple from a Saxon display table and eat it without paying, just to display his contempt and power. Later in the scene, he will choose a young Saxon girl to add to his collection. He has his eye out already. SOLDIERS are a constant, though noninvasive, presence. Some dramatic action occurs, climaxing with the repeated chords played at *forte* in the **OVERTURE** music. As the music changes, WILL SCARLET watches small children playing at being Robin and the Sheriff, and he sees the STOOL BOY watching as well. They both wish they could join in. As WILL begins speaking, the spotlight shifts to him, either through a freeze of other characters or some other method. The tolling bells of the **OVERTURE** drifts on into the background. WILL uses examples from the crowd around him to punctuate his words.

Will Scarlet: (To playing children) Play on, young robber in the hood! (To an off-stage ROBIN, who is off fighting in the Crusades) Robin. This is not the same place you left. Or maybe it's what this place would have been if you had never lived. Can you imagine an England without your...*(he motions to the playing children)*...special brand of inspiration? (To ROBIN) What are you doing so far away from home?!

I have news for you. Good news, I think. I'm going to be a father. Me, the man without a home, the red-caped dandy who threw away *his* birthright, is going to start a family of his own! And you're going to miss it! Well, what is news of new life...compared to the monstrous death of your Crusades, *hm*?

Robin Hood! You are what defines this country for me; you and your bow and ready hand...and your hope. That's *your* legacy, good friend. You and your band of Free Men. Will my child have a chance to grow up as free as we?

*Hmpf.* Free! Were we ever really free? Can you even utter the words "free men" without choking on the irony? They should be spat out, like a bit of apple, in defiance of the fates. Freedom is more a statement than a state, like wearing red amidst the green of the forest; to cover over the blueness of one's blood. *(He displays his own red garb.)* Freedom is a posture, a flair of the soul, an aura of will; nothing more, nothing less. *(Seriously)* Yet, with you it was a way of acting that is no act; a kind of honesty. *(Returning to his theatrical wit)* My idea of freedom is a little more...pregnant.

At least we still have the freedom to bawl and kick against a tired and ugly world, to carry on like a new born who doesn't know any better. *(He cries out, half imitating a fighting swordsman, half a bawling child)* Ah-h-h-h!! Ha, ha! *(He laughs at himself, invigorated by the outburst)* From the mouths of babes... *(Then he looks around himself, seeing the poverty and oppression.)*

What kind of world is this to be born into, anyway? And what has this long-winded dad-to-be done to make it any better? At least I know how to kick up a little dust, eh, Robin?

Music cue: **TOO MANY YEARS.** WILL flings a gold coin to a poor Saxon child, but it is intercepted by the SHERIFF and placed in his tax collecting pouch, causing guarded anger among the Saxon townspeople. SOLDIERS become alert at the possible confrontation. The SHERIFF gestures toward WILL and his GUARDS move forward, seeking WILL for questioning.

Will: But too much dust can...choke. *(WILL escapes through the crowd.)*

# TOO MANY YEARS

## **Saxon Villagers:**

Too many years we serve the Normans.  
Too many years they steal us blind.  
Too many years we bow before them.  
Too many years we live despised.  
Too many years they've beat and brutalized;  
No end in sight.  
In their eyes we're less than cattle fenced up in their fields.  
How can we escaped the princely power that they wield?  
Beaten down too long.

Long ago at the field of Hastings  
Their Norman king came sword in hand,  
Slaughtering independent Saxons,  
Making us slaves in our own land.  
How can we fight their brand of tyranny?  
Who'll make a stand?  
All day long we work the fields that once belonged to us,  
Then we grind the grain to flour that we cannot touch.  
Beaten down too long.

## **Sheriff:**

Look at you all,  
Spoiled and dull;  
No fight, all fraud.

Just get to work,  
Earn me some perks;  
I'm getting board.

You realize I hold all your lives in my noble hands?

## **Village Women:**

Morning to night we work the linen,  
Sewing up lace and pretty hems.  
But only Norman ladies wear them;  
We can't afford these precious gems,  
Unless we sell our virtue for a price  
To Norman men.  
All day long we cook and clean with kids strapped to our backs;  
No life of our own, repeating empty, endless acts.  
Beaten down too long.

## **Sheriff:**

Why do you curse,  
Moan and complain?  
Why waste your breath?

I keep you fed,  
Sheltered and safe.  
Give me some rest!

Taxes I take!  
But look what it makes!  
Give me some respect.

**Male Villagers:**

The sweat of your brow won't pay the taxman.  
 You can't pay the rent with calloused hands.  
 No matter how hard you work to get on,  
 Your earnings end up with them instead.  
 And if you complain, resist or carry on  
 They strike you dead.  
 All day long we do their bidding, "Come do this, do that!"  
 If you even hesitate, they sneer and knock you flat.  
 Beaten down too long.

**Dianah (& a growing group of Villager Men):**

Too long,  
 Too long

**All:** We have been giving in.

**Village Women:**

Resigned and spent,  
 We lend consent.

**Dianah (& a growing group of Villagers):**

Too long,  
 Too long

**All:** Treated like less than men.

**Village Women:**

Disowned and poor,  
 Too insecure.

**Dianah (& a growing group of Villagers):**

Too long,  
 Too long

**All:** Playing into their hands.

**Village Women:**

With laws severe,  
 We kneel in fear.

**Dianah (& a growing group of Villagers):**

Too long,  
 Too long

**All:** It's time for our final stand!  
 Stand!  
 Stand!  
 Stand!

**Village Women:**

It's time to rise  
 With opened eyes.

*(As the song has progressed, each member of Saxon society has been able to voice complaints and vent anger. After the climax, GISBOURNE breaks their will by choosing several unwilling candidates to be his new courtier. With the help of the overseeing SHERIFF and the SOLDIERS, the young women are lined up and GISBOURNE chooses DIANA. GISBOURNE confers with the SHERIFF who, in turn, seeks out DIANA'S FATHER. A "deal" is struck and the girl is pledged. GISBOURNE then let's the SOLDIERS take into custody his new possession. The rest of the candidates are discarded. The crowd comforts those who have been let go, then loses heart. Everyone drifts away from the Norman business. As the song slowly dies, the Saxons drift off stage, leaving DIANA, the GUARDS, the SHERIFF and GISBOURNE the only ones left in the marketplace.)*

**Saxon Villagers:**

Too many years we serve the Normans.  
 Too many years they steal us blind.  
 Too many years we bow before them.  
 Too many years we live despised.  
 Too many years they've beat and brutalized;  
 No end in sight.

**Dianah & Men:**

Too many years we serve the Normans.  
 Too many years they steal us blind.  
 Too many years we bow before them.  
 Too many years we live despised.  
 Too many years.  
 Too many years.  
 Too many years...

**Altos:**

Too many years.  
 Too many years.  
 Too many years.  
 Too many years.

**Sopranos:**

Too many years.  
 Too many years.  
 Too many years.  
 Too many years.

## "RUN, CHILD, RUN": DIANAH ESCAPES

### Scene 2

*As WILL speaks, GISBOURNE takes one last look at his purchase, then exits. The SHERIFF leads as two GUARDS forcibly bring DIANAH center stage.*

Will: That's when it all began, didn't it, Robin? Even before she came to the greenwood, it was that fool Gisbourne who threw the first stone. What an avalanche it began! He probably thought she was just one more fiery Saxon wench to add to his collection. His ambition was never very discriminating; he simply burns his brand of evil into everything he touches. But he couldn't touch Dianah.

*MARION enters, with several hand maidens. She is intercepting the SHERIFF.*

Marion: Where are you taking the young woman?

Sheriff: All Saxon *courtesans* are placed...near Lord Gisbourne's chambers.

Marion: This filthy, ill-mannered whelp? I think our Lord's higher sensibilities may pale at the sight. She needs to be cleaned and properly clothed. Perhaps my attendants can see to her...

*DIANAH spits at her feet. The SHERIFF disciplines her, apologizing to MARION.*

Sheriff: Please excuse the injustice, m' lady, but this one may need more than powder and perfume.

Dianah: The injustice? You bladder-tongued hypocrites. *(Her insult is ignored by all.)*

Marion: *(She interrupts the SHERIFF before he can strike DIANAH.)* One cannot estimate the power of a gentle hand. Attend please? *(She motions for her attendants to escort DIANAH.)*

*DIANAH continues to struggle until she recognizes the woman who has approached her. It is BRIGID, Dianah's Mother, Marion's chief woman in waiting. DIANAH is quieted by the sight.*

Marion: Don't worry, dear Sheriff. The responsibility will be mine.

Sheriff: As you wish, m' lady. Don't say I didn't warn you. *(He is a bit suspicious at DIANAH's sudden change of attitude. He already suspects MARION of being a spy, although no one is yet aware of those suspicions.)* I shall post a guard at your door, just in case.

Marion: Thank you for your concern. Lord Gisbourne will appreciate your decision, I'm sure. He will not be disappointed.

Sheriff: Yes. He doesn't like to be disappointed. Thank you for your assistance. Guards? *(Exit.)*

Marion: *(To DIANAH)* This way, my child.

*As soon as it is safe to talk, the conversation continues.*

Dianah: Mother, how can you be helping these people?

*BRIGID does not feel at liberty to discuss the true nature of hers and MARION's involvement.*

Brigid: Things aren't always what they seem.

Dianah: Aren't what they seem? What do they *seem* like to you? Perhaps I did not curtsy well. Did I offend your "higher sensibilities", Mother?

Brigid: Not in front of Lady Marion, child.

Dianah: Oh. "Please excuse the injustice, m' lady."

Marion: You need not quote Norman vanities to me, Dianah.

Dianah: *(To BRIGID, ignoring MARION.)* Do you know why I'm here? Do you know what is going to happen to me?

Brigid: You are here because Lady Marion has intervened on your behalf. We owe her a great debt.

Dianah: I owe nothing to any Norman. It makes me sick to see you bowing to them.

Brigid: Dianah...

Marion: We are on the same side, you and I.

Dianah: I am on no one's side. Not until I own my life, the whole of it. And no Saxon can say that.

Marion: Nor any Norman.

*DIANAH is stunned by the words. "What does she mean, Normans are not free?" she thinks to herself. Such a comment turns her whole argument on its head. She is speechless with chagrin.*

Brigid: Dianah. Please listen to Lady Marion. She's not going to hand you over to Lord Gisbourne. We'll find a way to get you out of here. Let her help...

Dianah: And go where? Do you know what's been done? Father sold me to Gisbourne, right in the market square, like I was one of his sheep. Sold me in exchange for the debt on his land. Now he can strut and carry on like he's one of them...until they find some excuse to steal it back again. He's such a fool! As if my life would seal any bargain with a Norman. Our lives aren't worth enough to them! ...I can't go back.

Brigid: Lady Marion understands more than...

Dianah: *(To MARION, ignoring BRIGID)* How can you know what it's like to be thrown out of your home. To have your life sold out from under you? To be made to wear filth and rags and beg in the streets? Unless you're fortunate enough to be of "service" to a Norman... You don't suppose my mother does your bidding because she choose to, do you?

Brigid: Dianah...

Dianah: Stop trying to explain away the fools of this world, Mother. Isn't being a good wife to father enough martyrdom for one lifetime?

Brigid: *(She tries to ignore the insult, to get back to the subject.)* You can trust Lady Marion. Just be quiet for a moment and...

Dianah: I don't care what you say. I won't bargain with any Norman!

Marion: Not even with one who is in the "service" of Robin Hood?

*DIANAH is again speechless. She stares at MARION, ignoring her mother's cautions.*

Brigid: You must speak of this to no one.

Dianah: You...?

- Brigid: And never compromise the safety of Lady Marion or anyone...
- Marion: I live in the same England as do you, Dianah. I have the same anger, the same fears. I may even share the same dreams.
- Dianah: Robin Hood?
- Marion: He supplies the goods the Sisters of Mercy give as charity. I supply him with information from inside Nottingham to help him intercept shipments of gold and supplies. We give each other what we can...when we are able...
- Dianah: Robin Hood...
- Brigid: Where did you think her Sisters of Mercy found the things they give away? Did you think Lady Marion supported half the poor of Nottingham from her own purse? Did you think she was so rich she could pay for it all herself?
- Dianah: Then you know how to find him, don't you? I could go *there!* If you can get me out of this castle...
- Marion: No, the dangers are greater than you suppose. I cannot...
- Dianah: I could go to Sherwood...and join Robin...
- Marion: It is a hard journey. Most of the paths are watched...
- Dianah: Then you *do* know! Tell me! Tell me! (*MARION won't agree. She turns to her MOTHER.*) Mother! You must tell me. You must!
- Brigid: It's not for me to say.
- Dianah: Mother, please! What else am I to do? You serve Robin Hood... Let me do as much, please. Please!

*BRIGID cannot provide the answer and dares not speak for MARION. But she wishes a better life for her daughter, a free, happier life, and looks at MARION, hoping she will agree.*

- Marion: (*MARION is uncertain, but she owes BRIGID a great deal and surrenders to her request. She nods to BRIGID then turns to DIANA, gravely*) You must give me your word that you will tell know one. Many lives are at risk.
- Dianah: ...You value my word? ...Yes. I will tell no one.
- Marion: I have a message to be delivered. You can be the courier. I will explain the way. But you must listen carefully. You must never be seen in Nottingham again.
- Dianah: Yes. Thank you. Tell me what I have to do.

*MARION retrieves a paper dispatch. She hands it to DIANA, then reveals a small dagger.*

- Marion: It must look as if we fought...
- Will: (*Referring to ROBIN away at the Crusades*) If it were only that easy to find you, Robin. (*Brightly*) Remember when one blast of the horn brought you running? (*To Dianah*) Look at that face. The call of the forest already rings in her ears. How can belief in one man make you believe in yourself with such certainty? And what happens when that man is no longer there?

*(To Audience)* Poor Gisbourne. Plucking a rose and forgetting about the thorns, he sabotaged his own ambition that day, bringing into his life a force he would not know how to handle. Although he's still trying.

*(Referring to DIANA)* And so am I.

**Music cue: CAN YOU HEAR IT NOW.**

*During WILL SCARLET's speech, MARION, BRIGID and other attendants prepare DIANA for her escape. Once DIANA is gone (out a secret passageway), the guards are called and react to the escape. The ruckus is short lived and the music cue follows as the guards hurry off stage to find the escapee. Once the music begins, DIANA comes forward, as if entering the forest...and freedom. The WOMEN never leave the stage, watching DIANA as if watching the progress of their own dreams. The blood MARION has shared, to free DIANA and keep them all safe, is like a baptism, a beginning to a new life...*



# CAN YOU HEAR IT NOW?

**Dianah:**

Can you hear it now?  
It is all around you...  
There is freedom in the air.

Shot out from a bow,  
Guarded hope has taken wing,  
Flaming from a hero fair.

Drowned out on city streets, hidden in lies,  
Chains from my past tug; but here freedom shines!

**Dianah:**

From where does it come?  
Is it deep inside my heart?  
Where does freedom get its start?

How can it survive  
When oppression haunts the land?  
How does hope retain its spark?

Here in the greenwood, where hate has no binds,  
Shielded by Robin Hood, here freedom shines!

**Dianah:**

Or am I running away from the life I should live?  
From the safety of all that I know?  
Can I give all I am? Can I find what I need  
If I go? If I stay? I must change. I must find dignity!  
Live by a more human creed!  
I must be free!

**Dianah:**

Can you hear it now?  
It is pouring from my soul!  
It is life, unchained and stark!

Like an arrow cold,  
Shot out from an ashen bow,  
I have come to find my mark!

Here in the greenwood, where hate has no binds,  
Shielded by Robin Hood, here freedom shines!

Here in the greenwood, where hate has no binds,  
Shielded by Robin Hood, here freedom shines!

**Women's Chorus:**

Freedom! Freedom!  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Run away to freedom now.  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Run away to freedom.

Here in the greenwood, where hate has no binds,  
Shielded by Robin Hood, here freedom shines!

**Mother:**

Oh. Run. Run. Run, my sweet child.  
Run. Run from this life, here.  
Hold to the courage and pride that  
I could never find, my child.  
Please don't ever loose your freedom.  
Oh, my sweet child.  
Run! Run, child, run!  
Carry my dreams and my hopes.  
Run, child, run!  
Carry my hopes!

**Women's Chorus:**

Freedom! Freedom!  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Run away to freedom now.  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Freedom! Freedom!  
Run away to freedom.

Here in the greenwood, where hate has no binds,  
Shielded by Robin Hood, here freedom shines!

**add Mother:**

Here in the greenwood, where hate has no binds,  
Shielded by Robin Hood, here freedom shines!

# "REFUGE": WILL & DIANAH MEET

## Scene 3

*As DIANAH wanders into the greenwood, WILL watches, commenting.*

Will: This was how I first saw her, wandering through the depths of Sherwood, all of Marion's careful directions gone from her mind. She was filled with wonderment, filled with expectation. It made me young again just watching her. So secure in Robin's prowess, and in the sanctity of her own dream, she showed no fear. The more lost she became, the surer she was at being found.

*DIANAH has not noticed WILL as he narrates and is startled when he speaks. WILL puts on pretend bravado.*

Will: Hold! Move no further. As guardian of the greenwood, I demand to know who you are what your business is here...

Dianah: *(Gasping, she pulls out her knife in self-defense.)* I...I bear a message, a message for...someone. But who are you? What are *you* doing in Sherwood Forest!

Will: *(Sarcastically)* Oh, so that's where I am. I always seem to be losing myself.

Dianah: You mock me, dressed in those clothes? I am one of the free people of the forest. Within this refuge I am granted free passage and the right to be treated with respect...

Will: Is that right? I didn't know the greenwood granted anyone anything. It has always seemed to me that if you want something here, you must take it of your own accord. *(He approaches her.)* And as for the idea of finding refuge *(in a smooth, swift move, he disarms DIANAH)*, perhaps you should scale the walls of the nearest nunnery. *(WILL grabs DIANAH in a hand-hold and places the dagger at her throat.)* Here lies survival, not sanctuary. Turn back before you are swallowed by...shadow.

Dianah: It is shadow that I leave. I have chosen freedom. *(She struggles ironically against WILL's grip.)*

Will: Freedom is rarely a matter of choice, fair child; at least, not your own. Most often, *(WILL spins her away, keeping the dagger ready)* it is simply a product of chance. And always at a price. *(They now faces each other)* By what chance does a beautiful maiden find herself lost in the most dangerous forest of all England? By whose issue?

Dianah: To find Robin Hood's encampment and.... *(She reaches for Marion's message, then comes up with a plan... She gasps, pretending to see his face for the first time. She knows at once this is not Robin, but bates the former nobleman in order to catch him off guard.)* ...and... Are you... he? Are you...Robin Hood? Oh, my liege! *(She kneels.)*

Will: If I were this "Robin Hood," what business would you have with me?

Dianah: I have a dream to share, good master; a dream that will change the world. And Robin Hood is the only man who can bring this dream to life.

Will: Dreamers dream with their eyes closed, good lady. But an outlaw must keep his eyes open. I think you have the wrong man.

Dianah: *(As she speaks, WILL mocks her descriptions, puffing out his chest, etc.)* Robin Hood is fair, unlike the treacherous Sheriff. He is generous and devout, unlike the scheming abbot. He truly dreams, unlike Norman lords, who merely snore. *(She knocks WILL's legs out from under him, stealing the dagger back.)* Robin Hood is the hand of retribution for the Saxons... *(She holds the knife to Will's throat.)* ...and he would never allow a peasant to kneel before him on the damp ground.

Will: Careful, m' lady. The blade is sharp.

- Dianah: Sharper than your wit, be sure of that! You certainly are the wrong man. I can see you are the one called "Scarlet," the only Norman in all England honest enough to declare himself an outlaw.
- Will: A life of thievery and murder does pass the time, m' lady.
- Dianah: Robin Hood you're not; but you will take me to him.
- Will: I am at your service, it seems. May I ask, who is it that so heartily has gotten the best of me?
- Dianah: I am the future...a future of my own making. I am Dianah of Sherwood Forest.

*Music cue: **OUT OF THE FOREST.** The MERRIE MEN enter in small groups, returning with game and stories to tell, with hunger and thirst, filtering on stage as the music builds. They meet the new recruit and strut their stuff. WILL mediates, then let's her on her own. The WOMEN'S CHORUS are now the wives and family of the men at the encampment, setting a table with goblets and pitchers and bread and fruit, welcoming them, tending to their sudden needs. General ad libs into song...*

## OUT OF THE FOREST

### Merrie Men:

We're Freeman, all,  
Beyond the law,  
We heed the call of Robin Hood. Robin Hood!

Before us all  
The mighty fall,  
The weak stand tall with Robin Hood. Robin...

We decide who comes and goes here, deep inside the forest.  
We choose who will live and die here, deep inside the forest.  
We take ev'rything we need here, deep inside the forest.  
Each of us is his own king here, deep inside the forest. Forest!

*(As ROBIN sings his first solo, some of the main MERRIE MEN (including LITTLE JOHN and MUCH) pantomime what he is singing about... Perhaps they hustle WILL up from the drinking table in front of ROBIN as ROBIN invites them to travel "on our turf". Then "treats them to a party" by sharing WILL's drink. In the course of this exchange, MUCH might pick WILL's pocket, steal his purse, run to a safe spot and see if there is any gold in it, test the coin by biting it, then run off happily, showing his prize to others. If WILL protests, ROBIN sings "They'll be no arrest." MUCH could share a coin with ROBIN on "You will invest." And LITTLE JOHN could intimidate him into thanking them for doing no greater harm on "Just been blest." It is all good fun and everyone joins in the unison chorus.)*

### Robin Hood:

If you want to travel on our turf just be my guest.  
We can treat you to a party, leave you quite impressed.  
We can guarantee that you'll be dining  
with the best.  
We'll put on a show that shames and outshines  
all the rest.  
Think you can refuse? Put us  
to the test.  
Think you're being used? There'll be  
no arrest.  
Then you'll foot the bill, we know in us you  
will invest.  
But you won't complain; you'll think that you have  
just been blest.

### Merrie Men:

We can rumble, we can tumble  
with the best.  
We can hustle, we can rustle  
all the rest.  
Don't refuse us, you'll just put us  
to the test.  
We don't worry, we know there'll be  
no arrest.  
When it's over, we know that you  
will invest.  
We will make you think that you have  
just been blest.

**All:**

We're Freemen, all,  
Beyond the law,  
We heed the call of Robin Hood. Robin Hood!

Before us all  
The mighty fall,  
The weak stand tall with Robin Hood. Robin...

**Merrie Men:**

We can rumble, we can tumble with the best.  
We can hustle, we can rustle all the rest.

**Merrie Men - baritones:**

We don't worry, we know there'll be no arrest.  
When it's over, we know that you will invest.

**Bass Voices:** We know when it's over you'll discover that you will invest.

**Robin Hood:**

*Follow me.*  
*Follow me... (Ad lib.)*

**Merrie Men Tenors:**

We don't worry, there'll be no arrest.  
When it's over - that you will invest.

*(Carried away by the emotion of the moment, Dianah rushes to the front of the gathering, sharing her vision of revolution, of freedom for all people, freedom so palpable, she can taste it in the wind... The Merrie Men respond with uncertainty, then enthusiasm.)*

**Dianah:**

Wait! Can't you hear it now, see it now?  
It can begin: We can make all men free,  
not just you and me. We can be-  
gin. In the  
countryside, cities wide. It can be-  
gin. Make our  
contribution a revolution to be

Free! Free! Free! Free!  
We can stand for all men to be

Free!  
Free!  
Free! Robin Hood. To be  
Free!  
Free!  
Free! Robin Hood. Robin...

Come out of the forest, now!

**Merrie Men:**

Come out of the forest, we can start a revolution.  
Come out of the forest, we can start a revolution.  
Come out of the forest, we can start a revolution.  
Come out of the forest, we can start a revolution.

Free! Free! Free! Free!  
We can stand for all men to be

We're Freemen, all,  
Beyond the law,  
We heed the call of Robin Hood. Robin Hood!  
Before us all  
The mighty fall,  
The weak stand tall with Robin Hood. Robin...

Come out of the forest, yeah.  
Come out of the forest, yeah.  
Come out of the forest, yeah.  
Come out of the forest, now!

*The band erupts with joy and energy. DIANA is welcomed into the band. ROBIN leads the way, as he always does, by congratulating her on her powerful rhetoric. WILL is especially proud of his new find.*

*But not all the Merrie Men are convinced. LITTLE JOHN believes that revolutionary zeal will only bring the Sheriff down on their heads...or worse...Prince John, who would bring the Royal Army to snuff them out. And won't revolution mean treason to King Richard's throne? As the tallest Merrie Man stands off from the excitement, he is joined by his faithful and constant companion, MUCH, the orphan he now guides and protects.*

## "JUSTICE OR DEATH": THE BAND DECIDES ON REVOLUTION

### Scene 4

- Robin: By Christ's wounds, I feel like a new man! Your words have power, m' lady.
- Dianah: Robin, the power is yours, not mine. You are the hand of justice for the poor. You are the hero of songs that turn pain into poetry.
- Robin: Ha-ha! Well put! Where did you find this forest muse, Will? How have we survived without her?
- Will: Whether we can survive with her is the more pressing question. She has the reflexes of an outlaw, to be sure (*rubs neck*), but her ambition may prove... dangerous.
- Dianah: "Dangerous"? It will be our glory! Once word has spread that Sherwood's become the center of a Saxon revolt, people everywhere will flock to our side.
- Little John: We don't need "people everywhere." Crowds are what cities are for.
- Robin: Think of it, Little John. As forest thieves, we're merely a handful of hornets the Sheriff brushes away without thought. But if we could expand our adventure, inspire the people to rise up and defend themselves, the combined sting would be more than the Sheriff could bear.
- Little John: And bring the King's own army down around our ears. We own the forest now. We lead a free life here. Why change?
- Robin: Life is made of change and chance!
- Gil: The Sheriff would never risk bringing in Lionheart's men. They'd discover his greed and the game would be up.
- Will: Were the King ever here to take notice.
- Dianah: You're right, Little John. You do lead a free life here. All of you! But what of others who don't have your courage? What about the rest of England? Will you keep freedom to yourselves?
- Little John: I did not become an outlaw by choice. And I did not join Robin so that one day I would find myself bearing arms against the Crown.

*The MERRIE MEN listen to LITTLE JOHN's argument as WILL breaks the tableau and turns to the audience. What follows is a scene fractured by breakout monologues, requiring careful staging to maintain momentum.*

- Will: Outlaws all, yet loyal to the Crown. (*WILL laughs at the irony.*) Loyalty is a funny thing, and Little John had it to a fault. It can drag you half way round the world, doing all sorts of crazy things in the debt of one loyalty or another. You know what I mean, Robin? But these men thought you were some kind of savior, someone who could take shame-faced criminals and make them see themselves as heroes. They knew that justice has nothing to do with laws but everything to do with what kind of man you're suppose to be.
- LJ's Fiancee: John Little never wanted to be outlaw, but when the rent was due and the baron paid only a single days wage for a fortnight's labor, John Little's fists were the ones that crushed the stingy fellow's skull in. Gentle though he was with me, John didn't always know his own strength. With a price on his head, he flew south, to where no man would know him or the shabby baron he slew. I believe he's happier working the long bow instead of the plow. For me, there is no place to fly. Our wedding would have been this Spring...

- Tom: If Robin's for it, I'm with him! He saved my life when the Sheriff's men caught me downing a birch to patch my roof. About to hack off one of my legs, they were. Said it was a fitting punishment, that it would let me know what it felt like to be one of the King's trees.
- Robin: You fletch the best arrows in all England. I was happy I had a quiver full that day.
- Tom: Made quick work of those soldiers! Showed them what it felt like to be one of Robin Hood's target stumps!

*The MERRIE MEN laugh, making fun of the Sheriff's men, while MRS. FLETCHER tells her side of the story.*

- Tom's Wife: If he hadn't've been caught chopping down the birch tree, he would've been found poaching rabbit or wild boar in the King's Forest sooner or later. How else is he supposed to feed his family? Tom's father was a poacher, as was his father. It's in the blood. Tom comes by on the new moon now with spoils from his thievery...more money than he ever made fletching arrows. I never know which visit will be his last. The Sheriff can't be dodged for ever.
- Leo: Tom's right. Robin saved me from losin' my ear. The Sheriff had it in his hand, ready to slice it off like a crust of bread. You were there, Little John. Remember? The Sheriff was bellarin' away, somethin' like: "A merchant who hears only half a bargain deserves only one ear." And right in the middle you come in swingin' your staff, scattering soldiers like scared pigeons. Remember that?...

*The MERRIE MEN laugh and carry on as LEO recounts the battle, while LEO'S DAUGHTER explains parts of the story he has left out.*

- Leo's Daughter: Father was caught selling sugar and spices to Saxons at a lower price than he charged the Normans. Robin helped father escape. But soldiers came later and dragged Mother away. The other children and I hid beneath the empty flour sacks while the Sheriff's men helped themselves to everything not nailed down. We were left with nothing. Father was the finest merchant in Nottinghamshire. And Mother...we're still not sure if she's even alive.
- Gil: Whatever will sting him the hardest, I say we do it! I still have my score to settle with the Sheriff. Accused me of shooting the King's deer, then cut off three fingers so I'd never pull back another bow string. But the hook on this glove will serve me well enough to send a shaft straight to his heart the next time we meet.
- Tom: If he's got a heart.

*GIL shows his hook and glove to the MERRIE MEN as they plan what they'll do to the Sheriff when they catch him, while GIL'S WIFE explains about his life before he was outlawed.*

- Gil's Wife: A smithy he was. And though the hours were long and the smells coated him so strong he could never wash them off, his work was his life. The iron he poured ran through his veins and made him strong. Turning the rock of the earth into something you could use, that's what made him happy. Now all he talks is revenge. The air in Sherwood may be cleaner, but life isn't nearly so sweet.
- Gil: If this thing you want, this "revolution," will mean death to the Sheriff, then it can't come too soon!
- Merrie Men: *Ad lib.* "Aye!" "I'm with Gil." "Count me in, Robin."
- Gil: What about you, Nathan. You with us?
- Merrie Men: *Ad lib.*
- Nathan: *(He is silent, uncertain.)*

Nathan's Wife: Nathan is not a man who often speaks his mind.

Tom: Do we count you in?

Leo: What say you, Nathan?

Nathan: We give away more in one week than the Sheriff of Nottingham makes in a year.

Merrie Men: *(Hooting, they ad lib. "You got that right.")*

Nathan: That, and his own actions, shame him daily. We needn't do more. I listen to Little John's words.

Gil: But Nathan, they lashed you in front of your good wife!

Leo: Beat you till your skin was blackened from the heat of it.

Tom: And for what? Because you fed acorns to your prize pig, acorns you happened to have gathered from the "King's Forest."

Nathan: It was against the law. I shouldn't have done it.

Merrie Men: *Ad lib.* "Against whose law?" "Come on, Nathan."

Leo: But they killed her, Nathan.

Merrie Men: They killed your pig!

*As the MERRIE MEN try to convince NATHAN to take revenge against the Sheriff, NATHAN'S WIFE speaks for him, for herself, and for their child on the way.)*

Nathan's Wife: He didn't want to run. I made him. "Go to Sherwood," I said. "I bet Robin Hood needs a good tanner." I would've joined Robin's band, too, if I had not a child on the way. What kind of world is this to be born into? Nathan treated his pig better than the Sheriff treats us.

Merrie Men: *Ad lib.* "Come on, Nathan." "Are you with us?" "Let's put down the Sheriff for good!"

Nathan: All this talk of blood-letting...it's what the Normans do to us.

Will: Oh, don't call us hypocrites, not when we're just getting on a roll!

Nathan: We won't be any better than they...

Dianah: Not until we stop them!

Gil: We stand on the side of Almighty God!

Nathan: I don't know... Maybe you're right...

Merrie Men: *Ad lib cheers. Everyone welcomes NATHAN into the fold.*

Much: *(Busting through the crowd)* What about me? Don't I have a say here?

Merrie Men: *Ad lib.* "Alright, Much." "Let the orphan speak." "Go ahead, boy."

Much: *(to MM)* Little John is the strongest man in all England, *(to audience)* probably in the whole world.

Merrie Men: *Ad lib.* "Sure he is." "Aye!" "You're right, there, boy."

Much: *(to LJ)* And you would never let anyone hurt me, would you...not even the Sheriff.

Merrie Men: *Ad lib.* "He sure wouldn't" "Not one bit." "Not even the Sheriff!"

Much: *(Announcing to everyone)* Little John is my champion...the best fighter alive. *(Pleading to LITTLE JOHN alone)* But who champions all the other Saxon children? Who will fight for them when their parents are killed, when their homes are burned?

*As MUCH describes his story in mime to the MERRIE MEN, WILL breaks out and narrates.*

Will: Normans own the land and everything on it...and still take half of what the Saxons make in taxes. No wonder these folks only scrounge out half a life: freedom to serve, but not to thrive. It never hit me more than when Much told his story that day. I could see it on your face, too, Robin. Remember? He spoke of his father and how he had milled flour from their own grain, without permission. He spoke of his mother, how she had gathered kindling for their cooking fire from the King's Forest, to bake the flour into bread. Finally, he told them of the soldiers breaking down the door to their house, cutting off both his father's hands, tying his mother to the oven grate, and spreading the coals about the house, trapping his parents inside. As flames devoured the home, our good Sheriff forced the boy to watch, to be a witness to what disobedience means to Saxons.

But he wasn't bitter. He spoke as if in a dream...of a beautiful Norman lady who found him cold upon the road and fed and clothed him, and brought him to Sherwood, to unite him with Little John...the small one and the giant...so that neither would be lonely anymore.

Dianah: *(To herself)* Marion. *(To MUCH)* Was that lady on the roadside...was it Lady Marion?

Much: *(He nods his head, "Yes".)*

*This confirms for DIANA that MARION is really on their side.*

Will: The boys story still haunts me. Is it right to bring children into such a world? But for Dianah, everything seemed clearer than ever. She'd found people she could trust. She'd found the light she was seeking. She had found her way...at last.

Little John: *(Speaking to Much more than Robin)* I am with you, Robin. By the love of this boy, I am with you.

Robin: Then it is decided. We will cling together, man to man. As we pledge our lives to Freedom, so do we swear before a Greater Law: Justice or death.

Merrie Men: Justice or death.

Will: It comforted these men to think that although they were outside the laws of kings, they were within the Laws of God; that while they could no longer be lawful citizens of England, they could one day hope to be the just citizens of Paradise.

And if by some slim chance they could win this war with the Sheriff, what they might gain would outweigh all they might lose. Dianah gave them purpose; to fight for a future worthy of a free people, to find a better way to live. *(Music cue: **WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.**)* If youth can't believe they can change the world, what's the use of growing older?



# WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

**Dianah:** *(to Robin)*

We can change the world;  
change it now.  
Throw away the chains;  
free us all.  
Build a better land,  
dressed in joy,  
dressed in forest green.

*(to Little John & Much)*

We can be their strength,  
be their flame.  
Rescue them from hell,  
from their shame.  
Show them how to live  
free of fear,  
free of tyranny.

**Robin:**

We can change our lives,  
bring them peace, let them rise.  
Give them back their hope, their  
will to strive.

**add Merrie Men:**

We can show them how to begin,  
that they can win...

*(to everyone, especially herself)*

We can change the world;  
change it now.  
Throw away the chains;  
free us all.  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

**Women's Chorus:**

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

We can change the world;  
change it now.  
Throw away the chains;  
free us all.  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

We can change the world  
far and wide.  
Tear down all the walls where  
tyrants hide.  
Roll away the stones;  
gather ev'ryone to our side.

**Merrie Men:**

Freedom.  
Freedom.  
Freedom.  
Freedom.  
Gather  
ev'ryone to our side.

	<b>Robin:</b>	
Can you hear it ring!	Can you see a world	Freedom.
Ring!	without walls, opened wide?	Freedom.
Ring!	Ev'ryone at peace	Freedom.
Can you hear it ring!	side by side.	Freedom.
	<b>add Merrie Men:</b>	
Can you hear it ring!	We can show them how to begin,	We can show them to begin,
Hear the call!	that they can win...	that they can win...
Hear the call:		
Let freedom in!	Let freedom in!	Let freedom in!
	<b>add Much, then Little John:</b>	
We can change the world;		
change it now.		
Throw away the chains;	Let freedom in!	Let freedom in!
free us all.	Let freedom	Let freedom
Shine her light 'cross the land!	Shine her light 'cross the land!	Shine her light 'cross the land!
We can change the world;	Let freedom in!	Let freedom in!
change it now.		
Throw away the chains;	Let freedom in!	Let freedom in!
free us all.	Let freedom	Let freedom
Shine her light 'cross the land!	Shine her light 'cross the land!	Shine her light 'cross the land!
Let freedom in!	Let freedom in!	Let freedom in!

## "REVOLUTION!": PREPARATIONS FOR AN AMBUSH

### Scene 5

Dianah: Oh. I have a dispatch for you. From Marion. *(She hands ROBIN the secret dispatch.)*

Robin: Marion? *(He takes the letter and beckons. WILL, obviously surprised to learn who was behind this courier. WILL reads the dispatch over ROBIN's shoulder.)*

Robin: This is perfect! Gisbourne is sending the Sheriff right to us! Seems he can't explain to the other barons why their gold never makes it past Sherwood. *(MERRIE MEN laugh. ROBIN reads on.)* "Prepare an ambush at the clearing near the Great Oak..." The Sheriff will be led there by someone who Marion says, "we should not harm; nay, should not even tangle with." Hmm. "If we treat her well," Marion writes, "she may nip and tuck for us on many a future raid, and, perhaps, save all our souls one day."

Will: Seems we have a riddle as well as an adventure to unravel.

Robin: *(To WILL)* It is the Sheriff who will be unraveled, good friend. *(To ALL)* Ready yourselves in ambush!

*Music cue: HAIL TO THE SHERIFF. The MERRIE MEN erupt with action and excitement, preparing for battle. They are seen by the audience as they hide so that their mocking reactions can be witnessed.*

*MOTHER TUCK enters first, gesturing toward the clearing, leading the way. The SHERIFF makes another grand entrance, followed wearily by his STOOL BOY. The SOLDIERS are a sorry bunch, unable to march to the irregular music, unable to stand in proper lines, and fearful of every shadow and movement in the famed forest of the outlaws. GISBOURNE could enter on a litter. He is mean, wary, impatient and bored. The ineptitude of the Sheriff and his men is abhorrent to him. The entire scene is humorous, absurd, and, ultimately, quite angry, due to the conflicts that drive it.*

## HAIL TO THE SHERIFF

**Sheriff:**

How I love to hear, "Hail to the Sheriff," "Hail to the Sheriff," in the wood.  
Soon each man will cheer, "Hail to the Sheriff," "Hail to the Sheriff," in the wood.

**Soldiers:**

Once we capture and bring all the outlaws, string all the outlaws by the neck.

**Sheriff:**

To the Sheriff!

**Soldiers:**

Once we master and round up the outlaws, ground up the outlaws on our trek.

**Sheriff:**

To the Sheriff!

**Sheriff:**

Then I'll hear it ring, "Hail to the Sheriff," "Hail to the Sheriff," through the wood.  
Once each Saxon sings, "Hail to the Sheriff," "Hail to the Sheriff," through the wood.

**Soldiers:**

Those that give up we'll rope into duty, dope into duty with the troops.

**Sheriff:**

To the Sheriff!

**Soldiers:**

Those that fight back we'll carve into pieces, fry them in greases for our soup.

**Sheriff:**

To the Sheriff?

*(ROBIN and MERRIE MEN are itching for battle. They sneak out of hiding, positioning themselves to strike, unnoticed by the SHERIFF and his SOLDIERS.)*

**Soldiers:**

Don't ask why,  
why,  
we fight for him.  
We might die,  
die,  
only to fight for him...

**Merrie Men:**

Let's just have at them.  
We can better them;  
they fight for him.  
They are evil men.  
Kill them where they stand;  
only to fight for him...

**Sheriff:**

Moments like this, on the  
Threshold of bliss,  
Give me a thrill.

With loyalty strong,  
What could go wrong?  
Bring on the kill!

**Soldiers:**

What if they show  
With arrow and bow.  
We're just sitting ducks!

*(MERRIE MEN strike, surrounding the SOLDIERS, but stay away from MOTHER TUCK. MERRIE MEN steal the SHERIFF's hat, toss it to MUCH, and begin their parody of what they have just seen. MOTHER TUCK is paired with GISBOURNE and keeps him from disturbing the performance.)*

**Much, the Miller's Son:** *(impersonating the SHERIFF)*

I love to hear, "Hail to the Sheriff," "Hail to the Sheriff," in the wood.  
Soon each man will jeer, "Hail to the Sheriff," "Hail to the Sheriff," in the wood.

**Merrie Men:** *(impersonating the SOLDIERS)*

Once we capture and bring all the outlaws, string all the outlaws by the neck.

**Much:**

To the Sheriff!

**Merrie Men:**

Once we master and round up the outlaws, ground up the outlaws on our trek.

**Much:**

To the Sheriff!

**Merrie Men, Much and Soldiers:**

How we'd all love to rail our dear Sheriff, nail our dear Sheriff to the wood.  
With his back turned, we'd flail our dear Sheriff, mail our dear Sheriff what he deserves!

**All:** To the Sheriff!

## "MORE BLESSED TO GIVE": THE HOSPITALITY OF A FREE PEOPLE

### Scene 6

*ROBIN takes the hat from MUCH, congratulating him on a job well done. Dusting it off, ROBIN gives the hat back to the SHERIFF, bowing.*

Sheriff: Uh, thank you. Most kind. Now, may I suggest...

Gisbourne: Nephew! Don't embarrass me like this!

Sheriff: Oh, yes. Outlaw Robin Rood, I arrest you in the name of the King and God!

Merrie Men: Oooo!

Robin: *(He looks from the SHERIFF to GISBOURNE as he speaks.)* "King and God". Pretty impressive. Too bad you have no soldiers to back your considerable conceit.

Gisbourne: On pain of death, surrender in the name of King Richard the Lionheart!

Robin: Why not add Prince John to your list, the scoundrel that backs your sorry band of mercenaries...

Will: ...and takes the lion's share of those taxes you collect.

Sheriff: In the name of the King...

Robin: *(Suddenly angry)* Since when do you speak for the King? If Richard would but return, he would put your whole nasty gang out on the street...*(and just as suddenly playful)* and then you'd be no better off than us Saxons.

Merrie Men: *(Hoots and hollers, cheering on Robin's verbal jousts.)*

Gisbourne: Saxon dogs, the lot of you! Guards, seize them!

Soldiers: *(No response. They do not wish to go against the outlaws.)*

Gisbourne: Seize them! Seize them! I command it! Why, you're all cowards and sinners!

Merrie Men: *(Growing laughter.)*

Robin: Cowards compared to the King and sinners before God. Yes, I suppose that is true enough. *(To GISBOURNE)* But not in the way you mean, dear... "Lord." *(Suddenly angry)* It is your law that sins, not ours. *(To the SHERIFF)* It is your hand that murders; we seek only to defend...*(and, again, playful)* and have a little fun while doing it.

Merrie Men: *ad lib.* "Hear, hear!" "You tell him, Rob."

Sheriff: Hold your tongue, parasite! That is a Norman Nobleman you are addressing!

Gisbourne: *(To the SHERIFF)* Oh, stop ranting, nephew. *(To ROBIN)* You know, I would normally have sent our Sheriff out alone, having complete confidence in his ability to quell the common rabble. But a recent escape by one of my new...ladies in waiting...pricked my interest in this little excursion...

Will: Let it not be said you were the barren baron.

Gisbourne: It seems this young runaway was last seen with the Lady Marion. I would hate to think there was any connection between you and...

- Robin: Lady Who? I can't imagine...
- Dianah: *(Suddenly appearing)* I escaped. Do you doubt that I'm a match for the Sheriff's soldiers? Look, I wear Lady Marion's blood on my sleeve. She had nothing to do with it.
- Gisbourne: *(He inspects the blood.)* Biting the hand that feeds you? How Saxon. *(He grabs DIANAH's wrist.)* Now return to the castle, at once!
- Will: Hold! *(His sword forces GISBOURNE to loosen his grip on DIANAH.)* I know the Norman reliance on clergy. You cannot ask the girl to enter into a life of sin...at your command. Let the holy woman command, instead. She has authority over matters of sin, am I right? Let her decide. *(Cheers/laughs.)* What say you, good friar?
- Gisbourne: A woman friar? By what jurisdiction...?
- Mother Tuck: The jurisdiction of the soul, honey.
- Gisbourne: Preposterous...
- Mother Tuck: Now look, sonny. I know you have a big heart, what with the way you bring in all those poor, hungry girls, givin' them a roof and bed and all. *(She sidles closer to him.)* All those girls and your big heart...a-pumpin' away. Ba-boom, ba-boom! *(She's being very bawdy now, getting increased reactions from the MERRIE MEN.)* Why, I bet you have one of the biggest... hearts in Norman England. *(She compares her cleavage to his chest.)* We're a lot alike, you and I. I wanted to be a friar because I love bringing sinners close to the bosom of forgiveness. *(She draws GISBOURNE's head into her bosom.)* Praise the Lord above me! *(She lets him go, roughly.)* But that men's club you call "the Church" wouldn't let me in, least ways not through the front door. They don't know what they're missin', let me tell you! Someone like yourself, though, you always want what's coming to you. I just think it's about time I'm let in on the action, you know what I mean? *(She looks at DIANAH and winks as she rolls up her sleeves, getting ready for a fight.)* I'm talking some Old Testament payback here!
- Dianah: Amen!
- Tuck: Ah-women!
- Gisbourne: Blasphemy!
- Tuck: According to whom? The Abbot? Don't tell me you're not up to the challenge...? *(She turns to the MERRIE MEN.)* I also wanted to be a friar 'cuz I love givin' penance to those pot scum sinners that need a little...cleansing. Some people are the Lord's handmaiden; I'm his personal washer woman. Know what I mean? *(She rolls up her sleeves)* Well, how 'bout it boys? Let's rub 'em out!
- Merrie Men: *(Cheers. Charge toward Soldiers, Sheriff and Gisbourne.)*
- Robin: Wait! We do not harm the travelers we rob unnecessarily. We welcome them to dine with us. We show them how hospitable a truly Free People can be!
- Tom: Then we search their saddle bags and take half of what we find.
- Gil: *(Showing his hook and glove.)* For half is what we pay at every turn.
- Tuck: It is more blessed to give than to receive.
- Leo: The price we charge for food is too high, but what better table can be found in this neck of the woods?
- Will: And what better sport.

Much:           What better tales to tell your children?

*Music cue: LAY YOUR BURDENS DOWN.*

*A table is moved up center and a feast is prepared. Everyone is jovial, except GISBOURNE. The SHERIFF is won over by the festivities before the song is done. The SOLDIERS join in the choreography. And MUCH, at the beginning of the last chorus, throws coins stolen from GISBOURNE's purse into the audience, getting everyone involved.*

Robin:           Gentlemen, welcome to our humble forest haven. May you enjoy the magnificent feast, served on the finest dinnerware...

Gisbourne:      I recognize these plates! These are my dishes! When did you steal my dishes?!

Robin:           New Friar...do you have a special blessing you can share with our...unequaled guests?

Tuck:            Sure, honey. Just give me some room...

## LAY YOUR BURDENS DOWN

### **Mother Tuck:**

Sometimes in this world,  
There are troubles you cannot master.  
When you loose control,  
    Lay your burdens down... at my feet.

Sometimes in this world,  
Worries build up faster and faster.  
You may loose control.  
    Lay your burdens down.

### **Tuck and Merrie Men:**

Come on and lay your heavy burdens down.  
Give up your life to save your soul.  
Come on and open up your pocket book.  
Just let me free you from your gold.

*(The MERRIE MEN begin the process of taking everything the SHERIFF and GISBOURNE own, including articles of clothing. MUCH gets GISBOURNE's purse; the rest of the booty is divided up.)*

### **All:**

Ha-lay-loo-ee. Ha-lay-loo-eye.  
Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!  
Ha-lay-loo-ee. Ha-lay-loo-eye.  
Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!

### **Friar Tuck:**

Sometimes in this life,  
You can't bare the weight on your shoulders.  
Time to struggle free.  
    Lay your burdens down... at my feet.

Sometimes in this life,  
You start feeling older and older.  
Set your spirit free!  
    Lay your burdens down.

**All:**

Come on and lay your heavy burdens down.  
 Give up your life to save your soul.  
 Come on and open up your pocket book.  
 Just let me free you from your gold.

Ha-lay-loo-ee. *Ow!* Ha-lay-loo-eye. *Hoouh!*  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. *Ow!* Ha-lay-loo-eye. *Hoouh!*  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!  
 (*MUCH throws GISBOURNE's coins into the audience.*)

Ha-lay-loo-ee. *Ow!* Ha-lay-loo-eye. *Hoouh!*  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. *Ow!* Ha-lay-loo-eye. *Hoouh!*  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!

Come on and lay your heavy burdens down.  
 Give up your life to save your soul.  
 Come on and open up your pocket book.  
 Just let me free you from your gold.  
 Just let me free you from your gold.  
 Just let me free you from your gold.

Ha-lay-loo-ee. *Ow!* Ha-lay-loo-eye. *Hoouh!*  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. *Ow!* Ha-lay-loo-eye. *Hoouh!*  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!

Ha-lay-loo-ee. *Ow!* Ha-lay-loo-eye. *Hoouh!*  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. *Ow!* Ha-lay-loo-eye. *Hoouh!*  
 Ha-lay-loo-ee. Hallelujah!

**Tuck:**

Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!

Sing hallelujah. Sing hallelujah. Yeah!  
 Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!  
 C'mon, sing it with me. Sing hallelujah! Yeah!  
 Ho! Ho!

Come on and lay 'em at my feet.  
 Come on, it's time to save your soul.  
 Come on and open up that purse of yours.  
 Just let me set you free.  
 Just let me set you free, yeah.  
 Just let me set you free!

(*Start the Audience clapping.*)

**Tuck:**

Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!

Sing hallelujah. Sing hallelujah. Yeah!  
 Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!  
 C'mon, sing it with me. Sing hallelujah!  
 Hallelujah!

## **"AMNESTY": STRIKING A BARGAIN WITH THE SHERIFF**

### **Scene 7**

- Much: (*MUCH runs around the front of the SHERIFF and picks a hidden purse from his boot. He looks inside and it is empty.*) Hey, there's nothing in this one.
- Little John: Then how's he gonna pay for our new friar's song?
- Dianah: He could always pay in blood.
- Gil: (*To the SHERIFF*) That's what you'd ask of a Saxon.
- Leo: Cut off his ear!
- Tom: Flog him, like he did Nathan.
- Tuck: First, let me administer a proper penance. (*He takes up a staff.*) Fear of the Lord must be impressed upon soft brains of hard heads!
- Sheriff: We'll give you everything! Just don't hurt me!



Robin: Hold on, lads. It seems our Norman Protectorate is in the mood to bargain.

Sheriff: Anything! Gold! Horses! It all belongs to my Uncle anyway!

Robin: We don't need the wealth of an old fool...

Merrie Men: We don't?

Robin: We have wealth enough, already. What we want is greater... *(To GISBOURNE)* Relinquish your hold on this maiden. Set her free, and we will do the same for you.

Sheriff & Merrie Men: No gold?

Robin: Only freedom...for Dianah.

Dianah: *(To GISBOURNE)* My freedom is not his to grant. *(To ROBIN)* Robin, think what they're offering us!

Robin: Your freedom is his to take away...under Norman law. Am I right, Will? I'm asking him to return it to you.

Sheriff: *(Trying to cut in before ROBIN changes his mind)* Done! It's a deal.

Merrie Men: *Ad lib disappointed. "Aw, come on, Robin. Can't we at least knock him around a bit?"*

Gisbourne: I will not bargain with outlaws.

Robin: You bargain with Prince John, don't you? And now it is your life that hangs in the balance. *(Draws sword.)* Look around. Every man here has reason enough to want you both dead. What can you offer that will persuade them to spare you? Be quick about it.

Will: You have till the count of all the fingers left on Gil Smith's right hand. Gil?

Gil: *(Looking at his right hand, he comically tries to locate a finger, of which he has only two.)* One. Two. *(He sighs and shrugs, giving up the search.)* Time's up. Have at him, boys!

Gisbourne: *(Deliberately and intense, directed into Robin's face.)* Amnesty.

Merrie Men: *(Dumbstruck, they ad lib their confusion. "What?" "Amnesty?" "Huh?")*

Robin: Swear it.

Gisbourne: By the King...I swear, damn it. I grant you amnesty. You and your "men." I give you all your precious freedom.

Robin: *(Amused)* You dare to swear by the King? The same King you've been stealing from all these years? *(Suddenly angry)* Swear by the Blessed Virgin. Swear!

Gisbourne: I swear by the Holy Mother, our Blessed Virgin. *(Without looking away from ROBIN, he directs the SHERIFF to speak.)* Nephew, you swear it, as well.

Sheriff: I swear.

Robin: *(He looks between the two men, measuring them. He seems satisfied, yet distant, pensive.)* Then live... *(ROBIN withdraws his sword)* ...and let live. *(To his men)* Let them go. We are all now free to go. They have made their promise.

Merrie Men: *(ad lib: "Let him go?" "Just like that?" "What, you believe him?" "You can't be serious!" "Now, wait a minute, Robin.")*

Robin: He swore by the Blessed Virgin; no man would break such an oath.

*ROBIN walks passed his men, not hearing them as they ad lib their chagrin, their bewilderment. He gathers his meager belongings, preparing to leave. He hears only WILL speak, as if the rest have become a dream. GISBOURNE, the SHERIFF and his SOLDIERS exit.*

Will: Robin. What...is happening? (*WILL senses that the tide has changed, that something has altered, fundamentally. He is deeply concerned, confused.*)

Robin: Sherwood has always been a fortress to me, a sanctuary. No doubt it is their presence, (*he nods toward the SHERIFF and GISBOURNE*) but it now seems more like a prison. (*He turns to Will.*) I can't really explain it...

Will: You're leaving.

*The MERRIE MEN are stunned at the revelation. ROBIN tries to explain, but is holding something back.*

Robin: I've never been able to enter Nottingham without being in a disguise. For once I'll be able to go to the Abbey and kneel before the Holy Mother...as me. No hiding. No deceptions.

Tuck: You don't need to go to an abbey to pray, my son. You already dwell in the forest, the Lord's most gracious cathedral. You'll put us all at risk, Robin.

*ROBIN doesn't really listen. He has made up his mind. He is preparing to leave.*

Robin: The Abbey is where the image of Our Lady rests. That is where I go when I need to pray.

Tuck: What is an abbey but four walls that a bunch of mumbling old men use to hide behind, shutting out real religion as they shut in the wealth they horde. Was this the example they were shown? We should not erect walls; we should tear them down. We should not hide; we should sing out! (*She is completely carried away with her speech, much to the MERRIE MEN's entertainment.*) The church is a place to appease the conscience of the rich as they pass out alms and buy absolutions. A place to parade their peacock conceits and self-insulating morals...!

Robin: Enough of us and them and theirs and ours. My mother was a Norman and my father was a Saxon. What does that make me? What has blood made of any of us? What have we made of ourselves? Peace stares us in the face. Are we to run from what it sees?

Dianah: This amnesty is no peace, Robin. It is Norman trickery...

Robin: So be it!

*(ROBIN exits, leaving everyone stunned.)*

Dianah: (*To WILL*) Go with him.

Will: (*No response. He looks after ROBIN.*)

Dianah: (*Desperately*) Will, this is foolishness. Stop him!

Will: (*Shaking off his daze*) You misunderstand me, m' lady. Foolishness is at the very heart of manhood. I would never counsel against it.

Dianah: Then at least go with him?

Will: He does not wish it, m' lady.

Dianah: Does not "wish" it? He's going to get himself killed!

- Will: Freemen grant each other the right to come and go as they choose.
- Little John: And the Sheriff did "swear" to his safety.
- Dianah: *(To LITTLE JOHN)* What good is the oath of a Norman? *(To the others)* How can any of you believe it? *(Her anger is aimed at WILL, the ex-Norman.)*
- Little John: If the oath is true, it speaks to our greatest hope.
- Dianah: Hope of what?
- Little John: Of peace, m' lady. Of an end to running. *(He shakes his head, unable to explain any better.)*
- Will: What outlaws do above all else is run. "Run, before the soldiers arrive!" "Run, before the Sheriff sees you!" Maybe he's tired.
- Dianah: If Robin dies, we'll never stop running! We'll never own our own lands; our own lives! We must protect him!
- Will: What, from himself? Robin never told me what to do. I won't try to tell him.
- Dianah: *(To WILL)* You don't care about Robin. You don't care about anything. You've never stopped running because you've nothing worth stopping for. But the rest of us have found something we don't want to lose. *(To the others)* I'm not about to fall for Norman lies. With every step he takes, the danger to Robin grows. He should not go alone. *(She exits.)*
- Tuck: *(She looks them up and down, thinking "Dianah's right, you know." Then turns to join DIANAH.)* Men! *(She exits, following DIANAH.)*

*The MERRIE MEN filter out as WILL turns to the audience to narrate the bridge into the next scene.*

- Will: *(To ROBIN)* I thought you'd given up. It didn't make sense, but there was Gisbourne staring you in the face, swearing on the goodness of the Holy Mother, and every one of us knew he was lying through his teeth without so much as a flinch, lying to you like that was *his* right, like that was what one *does* as a ruler of men. How could it not shake a man's faith. Yet, I never thought anything could shake your faith, Robin. Not yours.

How could I stop you? What was I supposed to do, pretend that I could protect you from, what...the future? I was too driven by the past. If there was anything I hated, it was unwanted protection. That was why I came to Sherwood. A young Norman lord, protected from poverty, protected from prejudice. Protected from everything but my own self-indulgence. I owned everything as far as the eye could see, a hundred lands, a hundred hundred slave, but owning things didn't make me free. So I ran. My freedom was flight...for the recklessness of it. I threw it all away because that's what I wanted to do. It was different for the rest of you. None of you knew the freedom of true choices. How was I supposed to keep you from choosing for yourself?

Maybe I was just protecting myself from being responsible for you. Stopping myself from doing what a friend is supposed to do. Like you said, Peace makes you look yourself in the face. No excuse to run any more. I'm sorry, Robin. *(Exit.)*

## "FOR A MOMENT": IN THE ABBEY

### Scene 8

*ROBIN enters the Abbey. MARION is waiting for him, furtively, and runs to him.*

Marion: Robin! Where is your disguise?

Robin: Marion! *(They embrace.)* Amnesty has been granted... *(He tests this idea on her.)*

Marion: *(She pulls away.)* It is dangerous for you here.

Robin: They swore by the Blessed Mother. *(He pulls her back.)* She will protect me.

Marion: Amnesty? It must be a trick...

Robin: *(Still testing)* Both Gisbourne and the Sheriff have given their oath...

Marion: You have always outwitted the Sheriff, but this is too careless.

Robin: *(Sarcastically)* Outwitted the Sheriff of Nottingham! *(Now he pulls away.)* Is it so clever to be a thief?

Marion: You are not a thief. You are all these people have. Return to Sherwood and keep you safe. Too many depend on you.

Robin: These people are hungry for more than food, m' lady.

Marion: You are food for more than an empty belly...

Robin: Do you know what they're asking of us now? It's no longer stealing for the poor or finding food for the hungry. They want a revolution.

Marion: What do you mean?

Robin: That girl you sent. Dianah.

Marion: She brought you my message...

Robin: And one of her own. She thinks we're selfish to keep Sherwood to ourselves. She wants to export the freedom we've made to all of England. To fight Gisbourne out in the open...

Marion: *(She doesn't know what to say. She knows what a disaster it would be for simple farmers to try to fight Gisbourne out in the open.)*

Robin: Maybe this amnesty can avert a disaster bigger than any of us imagines.

Marion: But this amnesty can't be real...

Robin: Of course it's not real. He had his back against the wall; he'd say anything to save himself. Gisbourne could never pardon anyone. But maybe it can buy us time. He won't strike right away. He'll wait until my men have dispersed, till everyone has gone back home.

Marion: Where he'll round you up, one by one.

Robin: In the meantime, I'll be...with you. *(He smiles and tries to hug her, joking.)*

Marion: Even with real amnesty, that would not be safe.

27b

Robin: *(He realizes he is being selfish, not thinking about Marion)* No. Not for you. Not with Gisbourne's men...

Marion: It would not be safe for you, either!

Robin: What good is being safe if I am not free to leave Sherwood? ...I just want a normal life...

Marion: You're not a normal man, Robin.

Robin: Yes, I am. I'm tired of hiding, especially from you.

Marion: There is no hiding between us, no secrets, no disguises. But that doesn't mean you can't continue tricking the Sheriff.

Robin: What, and start a revolution behind his back? These are farmers and tradesmen, with families. They aren't soldiers. A few of us pop out of shadows and steal some gold here and there. But march us onto the battlefield and we'd be slaughtered.

Marion: I know.

Robin: What else is there to do? That's what "Robin Hood" has become, the leader of a revolution. I can't do that. I can't lead these men to their deaths.

Marion: So you accept Gisbourne's lies and leave Sherwood...

Robin: To come here. To find you. Because I don't know what to do. Because I don't want to be Robin Hood anymore.

Marion: Then redefine him. Make him into something you can embrace, that I can embrace. *(She embraces him.)* But never stop being Robin Hood.

Robin: *(He hugs her back, but is still unsure, not knowing what to do, who to be. He hugs her as he speaks, almost to himself.)* Whose Robin? Yours? Theirs? Dianah's? I don't have control anymore. Everything's decided for me. What I've become isn't who I am. I don't even know which is the better one, which is the one to choose?

*She answers him with a kiss, then looks him right in the face. Music cue: **HERE, FOR A MOMENT.***

## HERE, FOR A MOMENT

**Robin Hood:**

Who? Why?

Can you guess what is here, deep inside?

Who am I? Who defines? Who decides?

Who am I, but a common thief in disguise, when

Here, at this moment,

Here, all my life's concealed.

Playing the hero.

Praying the world would heal.

Seal all its wounds.

Feel the force of the words written here on the altar,

On my heart,

Here, in your eyes.

**Robin Hood:**

What has changed? What is better now?  
 No. Nothing's changed...and never will.  
 Who am I but a common man.  
 Common dreamer.  
 Just a man in love.  
 Wanting more than time allows.

Just a man  
 With a common dream  
 Of a life lived  
 Free of fear,  
 Free to love you...

Who decides? Who defines? Who am I?  
 Can I be what they want me to be?  
 Can I find just a moment's need?  
 Can I find you...

Here, for a moment,  
 Here, where my life is real.  
 Here, for a moment,  
 Here, as I stand revealed.

Everything I love I see in you, Marion.  
 Everything I long for, here, in your arms.  
 Everything I love is yours. You are all I wish for,  
 All I feel.

Everything I love comes true when you're here, holding me.  
 Everything I long for, here, in your arms.  
 Everything I love is yours. You are all I wish for,  
 All I feel.

Here, for a moment,  
 Here, as I stand with you.  
 Here, for a moment,  
 Here, where my life comes true.  
 With you.

**Marion:**

Know who you are.  
 Know all the joy and hope you hold in your hands.  
 You are the one who can change their days.  
 Change their nights.  
 Let them carry on.

Know what you do.  
 Know all the dreams you bring to people afraid.  
 Uncommon dreams of what's right and good, more than  
 food, Growing every day.  
 Know who you are.  
 You are the only one that they believe in.  
 You are the one who can make their lives  
 Free of fear,  
 Free to find a way.

Here, for a moment,  
 Here, where my life is real.  
 Here, for a moment,  
 Here, as I stand...  
 Stand for all men. Oh, Robin. Don't you see?

Everything I love, you hold in your strong, gentle hands.  
 Everything I long for, here, in your arms, all around me.  
 Everything I love is yours. You bring with you all I wish for,  
 All I feel...deep within me.

Everything I love, I see in your strong, gentle eyes.  
 Everything I long for, here, in the light all around me.  
 Everything I love is yours. You bring with you all I wish for,  
 All I feel...deep within me.

Everything I love comes true when you're here, holding me.  
 Everything I long for, here, in the dreams all around me.  
 Everything I love is yours. You bring with you all I wish for,  
 All I feel...

Here, for a moment,  
 Here, as I stand with you.  
 Here, for a moment,  
 Here, where my life comes true.  
 With you.

*The SHERIFF and his SOLDIERS enter and grab ROBIN. ROBIN is dragged from the stage, well guarded.*

Sheriff:           There he is. Arrest him! *(To MARION)* Did he harm you, m' lady? The scoundrel will pay for what he has done, of that I am sure. *(With added irony that worries MARION)* Your part in this shall not be forgotten. *(To SOLDIERS)* Take him to the castle!

*Music cue: **END BURST.** All exit. End of ACT ONE.*

## ACT TWO

### "KINGMAKER": GISBOURNE'S AMBITION

#### Scene 9

*The curtain opens half way through the **SECOND ACT OVERTURE**. GISBOURNE and the SHERIFF are playing King's Corners, a Medieval board game similar to chess, played with one white king, many white pawns, and twice as many dark pawns (no dark king). The object is for the white king to reach one of the four corners of the board, or for the dark pawns to capture him first. GISBOURNE is seated on a thronelike chair, playing the white pieces. He is concentrating, for he doesn't like to lose. The SHERIFF is standing, more concerned about his nails and is rather bored. After the **MUSIC** is finished, a period of silence commences, highlighting the boredom. GISBOURNE makes a move; the SHERIFF counters with little thought, then lifts the white king from the board absentmindedly. He stands with one foot on his stool. The whole while WILL stands between them, an unseen ghost, commenting on the nonaction with his expressions. Finally, he speaks, then moves to a position on stage from where he can watch the action without becoming involved.*

- Will: I'd almost forgotten how exciting the life of a Nobleman can be. At least neither of them are expecting children any time soon. As if it would change anything for them. Hardly seems possible, though, does it? They'd have to grow up first, themselves.
- Sheriff: I love the detail. Don't you? *(He turns the carved piece in his hands admiringly.)*
- Gisbourne: Put my king back on the board.
- Sheriff: *(Ignoring him)* Just look at this robe. The use of jewels and fur. *(He stands on his stool with both feet.)* The design is stunning. The artisan who carved this piece...
- Gisbourne: Put my king back on the board. And get off that stupid stool.
- Sheriff: *(As if it was the STOOL BOY's fault, the SHERIFF steps off the stool and motions for the BOY to remove it and himself, then puts the playing piece back.)* I think you ought to make that woodcarver of yours into a tailor. He has quite a flair for fashion.
- Gisbourne: I think you ought to shut trap. *(He speaks without looking up from the board.)*
- Sheriff: You should bring out your pawns as quickly as your puns, Uncle. Now your king will never escape.
- Gisbourne: I hate playing games.
- Sheriff: You always wait for me to make a mistake. Now you're entirely...boxed...in. *(His last move insures a win.)*
- Gisbourne: I hate...losing.
- Sheriff: *(He pauses a moment, making sure GISBOURNE is not about to begin a tantrum, then continues his prattle.)* Really, *(he takes up the king again)* you should talk to your carpenter.
- Gisbourne: The only tailoring my carpenters will be doing is fitting a noose around Robin Hood's neck. *(Suddenly standing, brushing away the game)* When will the gallows be finished?
- Sheriff: *(Remaining calm)* Not till midday, at least.
- Gisbourne: I've waited too long already. *(To GUARDS)* Bring him before me, now!



Sheriff: The carpenter?

Gisbourne: No, you imbecile. Robin Hood!

Sheriff: *Tsk. Tsk. Tsk.* Killing your opponents pawns too early is not good strategy, Uncle. Let him trip over them a bit first. Besides, I've taken the liberty to plan a small feast around Robin Hood's execution. A kind of pay-back, you might say.

Gisbourne: I hate it when people take liberties. That word annoys me.

Sheriff: Ah, but in this case, we may be able to celebrate more than the death of the Sherwood fox. Perhaps a Nottingham mole will be thrown into the bargain.

Gisbourne: I hate riddles. Don't give me riddles. Guards, bring me the prisoner.

Stool Boy: Oh, can I go fetch him for you? Please?

Gisbourne: ...Now!

*The SHERIFF waves off the STOOL BOY who exits with at leased two GUARDS to fetch ROBIN.*

Gisbourne: It seems the outlaw has fans under every rock. Is this the "mole" you riddle me with?

Sheriff: The Stool Boy? Oh, he hardly counts, even as a rodent. No, this is a much bigger catch. Think, Uncle. It was you who first alerted me to her. My plan is to bind her and her captive love together...if we give them enough rope...

Gisbourne: Marion? Then I was right...

Sheriff: She is the King's niece. Until Richard falls in battle, or dies of some dreadful Moorish disease, we must act with caution. But tonight's celebration may provide a perfect opportunity...for treason.

Gisbourne: You better be right. A mistake with the King's niece could ruin me. The prestige of Nottingham Castle rides on this.

Sheriff: If everything goes as planned, we will be toasting the deaths of the whole lot of them. Did I tell you it involves a special troupe of actors...

Gisbourne: I hate actors!

Sheriff: These are more qualified than most to commemorate the passing of our local woodland hero, I think. This feast will go a long way in feeding your ambitions, Uncle.

Gisbourne: Nothing short of the Palace, Nephew!

Sheriff: And the Throne, itself!

Gisbourne: Not the kingship, you idiot! Kings are betrayed! Kings get beheaded! *(He grabs the wooded piece from the SHERIFF.)* Kings get their escape routes cut off behind them by traitors, remember? I will be the power behind the throne. The one who manipulates. *(He slams the king piece onto the game board, scattering the pawns.)* The one who survives!

Sheriff: Of course! You can trust me to...

Gisbourne: *(With a flick of the hand, he silences the SHERIFF.)* I hate...trust.

*Music cue: KINGMAKER.*

# KINGMAKER

**Gisbourne:**

Some men will flinch when challenged.  
In a pinch, they turn tail, missing chances.  
No advancement goes to the sloppy sop weighed down by conscience.

**Sheriff:**

Some men will stray when fortune comes their way.  
But not dear Uncle (specially if the fortune belongs to others).

**Gisbourne:**

Some men are fools and some men become martyrs.  
One man who is smarter pulls the strings behind puppet kings...  
That one who really holds the reigns.

**Sheriff:**

Will reign supreme.

**Gisbourne:**

That will be me.  
The royal brain.

**Sheriff:**

The new Maker...

**Gisbourne & Sheriff:**

of Kings! Kings!

Gisbourne: It is within reach. I can taste it.

Sheriff: I love feasts.

Gisbourne: I'll finally get out of this backward rathole.

Sheriff: I know what you mean. I'm with you every step...

Gisbourne: What makes you think I will take you with me?

Sheriff: But, I thought...

Gisbourne: Oh, you are such a fool.

**Gisbourne:**

Some men's ambition stops when someone gives in.  
That's when the fun should begin! Heads should roll! *(Using the SHERIFF as an example, GISBOURNE*  
If you want to control, got to dole out more blood and gore. *throws him to the floor, making him kneel.)*

**Sheriff:**

Some men just stand by. Some men fear for their lives,  
Crying, "Uncle!"

*(GISBOURNE twists his arm, making say "Uncle.")*

**Gisbourne:**

Dying to impress...They're the ones I like the best.  
Like little pets.

*(He let's the SHERIFF, but remains over him.)*

**Sheriff:**

The ones that fear.

**Gisbourne:**

The ones that sweat.

*(He finally lets the SHERIFF up.)*

**Sheriff:**

The ones who cheer...

**Gisbourne & Sheriff:**

the Maker...of Kings! Kings!

*(GISBOURNE brushes him off, as if it was all a joke.)*

**Sheriff:**

Oh! Can you imagine me then?  
Oh! Dripping with power and friends!  
Standing alone as the Counsel Supreme...oh, my!  
Wouldn't you, oh, couldn't you just cry.  
Dressed like a queen!  
Wouldn't you, oh, couldn't you just die!

*(The SHERIFF has secured a knife and wields it.)*

**Gisbourne:**

When I'm Kingmaker.

*(GISBOURNE grabs his wrist, stopping the blow.)*

**Sheriff:**

Kingmaker.

*(The knife falls to the ground;  
the SHERIFF echoes the inevitable, defeated.)*

**Gisbourne:**

Creator Prime!

**Sheriff:**

Kingmaker!

*(He concedes GISBOURNE's prowess.)*

**Gisbourne:**

Kingmaker!  
Liberá nos.

**Sheriff:**

Salva nos.

*(He asks for forgiveness.)*

**Gisbourne:**

Justifica-ha-ha-ha nos.

**Gisbourne & Sheriff:**

Miserere, Maker of Kings!

**Sheriff:**

Gloria, imperium!

**Gisbourne & Sheriff:**

Miserere, Maker of Kings.

**Gisbourne:**

Some men's ambition stops when they think that they've won.

Playing simple games, they follow rules, like little fools.

Don't they know it's no longer play?

**Sheriff:**

Some men are martyrs. Some men should be smarter. *(He is singing about himself.)*

**Gisbourne:**

Some men make kings!

Holding all the power...

Waiting for the perfect hour!

The time to strike!

**Sheriff:**

To win the ring!

**Gisbourne:**

To be a king!

**Sheriff:**

To be the great, new Maker...

**Gisbourne & Sheriff:**

of Kings! Kings!

Sheriff: Can't you just see it now: Sir Guy of Gisbourne...

Gisbourne: The First!

**Gisbourne & Sheriff:**

The Kingmaker!

## "NO MORE GAMES": ROBIN IS BROUGHT BEFORE GISBOURNE

### Scene 10

*The STOOL BOY gymnastically enters and announces the prisoner. ROBIN is brought in chains by the GUARDS. GISBOURNE seats himself on his throne.*

Stool Boy: I present to you...Robin Hood!

Gisbourne: I will be so glad when that name is finally buried and forgotten.

*The SHERIFF cuffs the STOOL BOY and makes him bring the stool to his side, showing his displeasure at the BOY's sudden glee and gregariousness. SHERIFF leans on the stool with one foot.*

Sheriff: Leave the theatrics up to the professionals, boy.

Gisbourne: Bring the prisoner to me.

*The GUARDS drag ROBIN into position. ROBIN looks at the ground, not GISBOURNE.*

Gisbourne: Rest your weary bones, Robin. *(With a wave of his hand, the GUARDS force ROBIN to kneel.)* You're my guest now. I'm sure you'll find me as delightful a host as you. *(After smiling and gloating a moment, GISBOURNE suddenly lunges toward ROBIN and grabs him by the hair, forcing him to look up.)* Enjoying your stay? Oh, I almost forgot. *(He throws ROBIN's head back downward.)* You've been granted "amnesty." Well, *(he returns to his throne and sits.)* pardon me. Ha ha ha!

Robin: A man of his word.

Gisbourne: Of my word? You have it backwards, Robin Hood. It was you who broke our little... arrangement.

Robin: What are you talking about...

Gisbourne: Oh, come now. Don't be so naive. Do you think I would have let you survive this long if you did not serve some purpose for me? We had a deal, you and I, and it was lining both our pockets. I ordered taxes collected, you stole the taxes, redistributed them, gave me an excuse to up the ante, all the while skimming off the top and blaming you for the difference. It made it much easier to take from my brother barons while you played the middle man.

Robin: That's not what...

*With the wave of GISBOURNE's hand, the GUARDS silence ROBIN as GISBOURNE continues his speech.*

Gisbourne: Spare me your tortured rationalizations. They are a thing of the past. Everything has changed. No more games. Your band of outlaws seems to be taking themselves too seriously lately, fancying themselves as...insurgents. Revolutionaries. You've broken your end of the bargain. You will no longer be tolerated.

*With another wave of GISBOURNE's hand, ROBIN is dragged to another location, from where he will be a witness to the commemorative performance by the disguised MERRIE MEN. WILL steps forward and narrates the transition.*

*[NOTE: If "STRETCH UP" is staged to incorporate MUCH stealing the keys and other action included or implied in WILL's first two paragraphs of narration, and if no time is needed for changing scenes, the following three paragraphs could be cut. Then the SHERIFF's announcement would come here, followed by the FANFARE and the entrance of the PLAYERS.]*

# "STRETCH UP": A MINI-OPERA ABOUT THREE MARTYRS

## Scene 11

*As WILL speaks, COURTIERS enter, setting the stage for the big production number to follow, creating a festival atmosphere, complete with jugglers, acrobats, etc. When WILL gets to the part that mentions MUCH, the orphan enters, milling through the courtiers, weaving his way toward the STOOL BOY. They exchange significant glances and MUCH positions himself, with the STOOL BOY's covert help, to eventually unlock the chains binding ROBIN later during the upcoming song.*

Will: How we scrambled to come up with something to pry you free! I hate to say how much fun it was, with you in chains and all. The whole thing ended up being Mother Tuck's idea...she was really beginning to throw her weight around. Get through the gates by posing as a performing troupe, then use the confusion of the celebrations to set you free. I figured the disguise would work, until they heard some of us sing... We sent Much in first, through a narrow window in the kitchen, to spy and pick up any gossip that might help get you out. He ran into the Sheriff's Stool Boy and, well, one thing led to another. The little pick pocket outdid himself, lifting the key that would unlock your chains. I'm not sure I ever told you the whole story, what with the rush of events that happened after.

Isn't it amazing how we can hope beyond hope, how we can even celebrate in the face of sure defeat? With the world crashing down around us? By the look on your face that night, I'd've thought you had the front row seat at the greatest show on earth!

*WILL turns and puts on his mask, becoming one of the MERRIE MEN PLAYERS.*

Will: Then again, maybe you were right.

*WILL joins the festivities. The SHERIFF steps forward to announce the group.*

Sheriff: It is time. Bring on the traveling players.

*Music cue: **STRETCH UP FANFARE.** WILL is the troupe's MC. He speaks after the brass fanfare stops.*

Will: We are here to commemorate a great occasion:  
The imminent execution of that infamous outlaw, Robin Hood.  
To this end (and to his own particular end), we present our humble performance...

*Music cue: **STRETCH UP TO HEAVEN.***

Will: Attention, ladies and gentlemen! We have before us a woodman of ill repute,  
Caught in a political dispute  
And condemned to death (or so says the rumor).  
We hope he faces his public hanging with good humor,  
And to remember that hanging's not so bad. It brings you closer to heaven.  
...So, be glad!

*The MERRIE MEN enter, disguised by masks. (For example: WILL=Cardinal; TUCK=Foliage/Mother Earth motif; LITTLE JOHN=Bear; DIANAH=Snow Owl; ROBIN=Fox.) They fill the court with color and energy. But the real intent is not merely entertainment; they wish to distract the guards and noblemen by incorporating them into their performance, eventually setting ROBIN free and escaping, maybe even without them knowing, thus avoiding a fight altogether. The performers are listed as CHORUS or split into vocal parts, unless specific characters are to sing. Splitting parts is up to direction. The WOMEN'S CHORUS may be added where needed and, by the end, the COURTIERS may also be participating. This is a large production number...have fun.*

**Mother Tuck:**

Stretch up.  
Stretch up to heaven.  
Stretch up.  
Stretch up to heaven.

Closer to the sky,  
Hold your chin up high...  
Keep tryin'.  
Have no doubts.  
Yes, you do.  
Yes, it's true.  
You've got so many troubles.  
Don't be down.  
Get off the ground.  
It's time to be immortal!

Stretch up.  
Stretch up to heaven.  
Stretch up.  
Stretch up to heaven.

Feel it in your bones  
(As they creak and groan).  
You're swingin',  
Hangin' there...  
Don't just feel ensnared.  
Be free of care.  
You're light as air as you dangle to and fro.  
Too late for prayer.  
Life isn't fair.  
You've got a rare chance to be immortalized.

**Chorus:**

Stretch up.  
Stretch up.

Stretch up.  
You've got second thoughts;  
Think you have lost,  
Cuz life is fraught with so many troubles.  
So don't be weighed down;  
Get off the ground,  
Cuz we have found ways to be immortalized.

Stretch up.  
Stretch up.

Stretch up.  
Don't just feel ensnared.  
Be free of care.  
You're light as air as you dangle to and fro.  
Too late for prayer.  
Life isn't fair.  
You've got a rare chance to be immortalized.

Will: "To be immortalized." Ah, yes. To be truly blest.  
Take Saint Blaise, for example, and sample martyr among the ample saints,  
And patron of those suffering *throat* complaints.  
Born wealthy, of high birth,  
He gave it all up for the life of a hermit.  
Wild beasts became tame in his presence.  
The sick and wounded were healed by his beneficence.  
His blessings were sought far and wide.  
...But all this attention hurt the Governor's pride.  
The *Powers that Be* ordered him tortured and beheaded.  
Yet the Powers that *Will Be* brought great miracles that fed  
His fame, and his name grew in a blaze of glory, till this day!

*The enthusiasm of this vignette spills right into the singing of VERSE 2 by the ensemble. NOTE: Both these first two VERSES are sung more or less to ROBIN the Captive. But the second interlude coming up shifts attention to the SHERIFF (and the GUARDS), including them in the second vignette so that they do not notice how ROBIN is being freed by MUCH behind everyone's back.*

**Women's Voices:**

A new will be done.  
 A new kingdom come.  
 A new will be done.  
 A new kingdom come.  
 A new will be done.  
 A new kingdom come.  
 A new will be done.  
 A new kingdom come.  
 A new will be done.

**Tenors:**

A new kingdom come.  
 A new will be done.  
 A new kingdom come.  
 A new will be done.  
 A new kingdom come.  
 A new will be done.

**Basses:**

Kingdom come.  
 Will be done.  
 Kingdom come.  
 Will be done.  
 Kingdom come.  
 Will be done.

**Mother Tuck:**

Stretch up to heaven.

Stretch up to heaven.

Make it into fun.  
 Make one final glory run.

Give your death panache,  
 Dramatic flash;  
 Don't make a hash  
     when your soul is riding on it.

Make a splash.  
 You'll be a smash...  
 Cuz it's your last chance to be immortal!

Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.

Closer to the sky,  
 Hold your chin up high...  
 You're flyin'.  
 Don't close your eyes. Remember:  
 As you're hangin' there,  
 Don't have a care.  
 Light as air,  
 Like an arrow flying...

Don't try to struggle free;  
 Sway with the breeze.  
 If your credo's got credentials,  
 You'll join the immortals!

**Chorus:**

Stretch it up.

Stretch it up.

Fun.  
 Glory.  
 Stretch it up.  
 Stretch it.  
 Stretch it.  
 Stretch up to heaven.  
 Stretch it.  
 Stretch it.  
 Stretch up to heaven.

Stretch up.

Stretch up.

Stretch up to...

Oo...

...

...flyin'

Come on.

As you're hangin' there,

Don't have a care.

Light as air.

...Strike one final blow.

Sway with the breeze.  
 If your credo's got credentials,  
 You'll join the immortals!

*After VERSE 2 is completed and the haunting electric guitar introduces a change of mood, WILL speaks over the plaintive singing, urging the SHERIFF to play the part of St. Adrian.*

Will: "To join the Immortals." Yes, Sheriff, would you be so kind as portraying the immortal martyr, Adrian of Nicomedia? Over here, please.

*The clarinet begins playing a rearranged reprise of HAIL TO THE SHERIFF. The lyrics following WILL's speech are sung underneath, as background.*



**Will:** A soldier in service of the Emperor,  
 He was put in charge of Christian prisoners. *(Played by Robin's GUARDS.)*  
 So moved was he by their courage and faith,  
 His own beliefs he soon replaced.  
 But bold conversion has its price...  
 He was condemned to death, not once, but twice.  
 They pulled him apart, limb by limb,  
 Over an anvil, grey and grim.  
 The parton saint of prison guards *(to Sheriff's SOLDIERS)* and arms dealers *(to SHERIFF)*  
 Adrian's name is invoked by many a plague healer.  
 ...Too bad, is it not, that one must be tortured so cruelly to be counted,  
 To stand up and be counted,  
 A martyr?

**Men:**

Hear the wind singing, "Hail to the martyr. Hail to the martyr," through the wood.  
 Hear the wind ringing, "Hail to the martyr. Hail to the martyr," through the wood.

**Women:**

There are souls crying tears for their martyr, fears for their martyr, 'neath the hood.

**Men:**

Hear the wind singing, "Hail to the martyr. Hail to the martyr," through the wood.

*Music brightens, with organ solo, as WILL makes everyone happy again.*

**Will:** But in your case, dear Sheriff, I'm sure the Almighty will make an exception. You are already held in such high esteem, you don't need the gallows to raise you up any further. To reach immortality, you need only stretch...all credibility!

*VERSE 3 is sung to the SHERIFF. Half way through, ROBIN is secretly freed and given a mask. He joins the players. The SHERIFF is pushed around and is eventually gagged, stuffed in the chair that had held ROBIN (on "knock 'em dead"), and chained. No one notices.*

**Mother Tuck:**

Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.

Stand up on your throne...  
 You'll be half way home,  
 Just stretch up;  
 All alone...  
 Hey, hangman!  
 Wash those hands.  
 Don't touch the bloody martyr.  
 Set his soul free!  
 Haunted trees.  
 He'll be in all the histories.

**Chorus:**

Stretch up.  
 Stretch up.

Stretch up.

Don't you fear, hangman,  
 You've washed your hands.  
 You can't touch fans of a bloody martyr.  
 Set his poor soul free  
 To run through the trees  
 And haunt all the pages of all the histories.

Stretch up.  
Stretch up to heaven.  
Stretch up.  
Stretch up to heaven.

Stretch.

Stretch.

Don't be slouching so;  
Don't be grouching so;  
Go stretch up...  
To and fro!  
Stretch your legal briefs  
Beyond all beliefs;  
Like comic relief, you will knock 'em dead.  
So as you make your case,  
To save some face,  
Just don't debase those who've been immortalized.

Stretch.

Stretch your legal briefs  
Beyond all beliefs;  
Like comic relief, you will knock 'em dead.  
So as you make your case,  
To save some face,  
Just don't debase those who've been immortalized.

*Now that ROBIN is freed and given his mask, attention focuses on GISBOURNE. Flaunting their success, the MERRIE MEN use ROBIN to portray the next martyr, St. Sebastian, the patron saint of archers. VERSE 3 ends abruptly. As tinkling bells fill the air, WILL announces the next vignette:*

Will: Consider the martyr: Sebastian, patron saint of archers.

*A new vignette is set. Once the organ-grinder waltz starts, WILL continues...*

Speaking out on behalf of slaves, Sebastian set himself apart.  
To him, all men were equal, before God, to be treated with a respectful heart.  
But such a doctrine cannot coexist with the likes of tyrants and psychological misfits.  
So he was pierced in every limb  
By arrows; but death could not overcome him.  
He was nursed to health by a kindly widow.

*MUCH approaches MARION to get her to play the widow. MUCH cannot keep it secret that he knows her and whispers her name, tipping off GISBOURNE. MUCH proudly yet stealthily shows her the key, slipping it into her hand. The audience cannot tell if anyone else notices, although GISBOURNE plays very close attention. MUCH runs back into position as MARION kneels to sing.*

**Marion:**

Rest, my gentle lord.  
Soon you will need  
All this, and more.  
When you can  
Stand.  
Stand!  
When you are ready to rise.

Will: He rose again, a man beyond pain,  
Beyond sorrow,  
And confronted the dumbstruck Emperor.

*DIANA and MARION stand hand in hand, leading the reprise of **TOO LONG**. Just as ROBIN is about to join them, GISBOURNE orders a GUARD to pull MARION back and hold her. DIANA stands in their way, adding to the meaningfulness of the following reprise from Scene 1:*

**DIANA, ROBIN & ALL PERFORMERS:**

Too long! Too long, we have been giving in!  
Too long! Too long, treated like less than men!  
Too long! Too long, playing into their hands!  
Too long! Too long! It's time for our final stand!  
Stand! Stand! Stand!

*On the last "Stand," the GUARDS move MARION around DIANA and place her back in her seat, standing watch on either side. Then ROBIN, now acting as the martyr St. Sebastian, confronts GISBOURNE, delaying any further orders regarding MARION. He begins jovially, holding his anger in check. But by the end of the stanza, he is overcome with hatred for GISBOURNE and must be restrained.*

**Will Scarlet**

He said...  
 Yes, and he said...  
 And he said...  
 Yes, and he said...

**St. Sebastian (Robin Hood)**

You've had the throne too long.  
 It's time that you step down.  
 Let everyone go home.  
 We can run things all alone.  
 Go take the day off;  
 Take two, three or four.  
 Don't have to come back;  
 Just kick yourself right out the door.  
 Then on the way home,  
 When you're all alone,  
 Maybe someone with lots of nerve  
 Will give you what you deserve!

*LITTLE JOHN and WILL pick ROBIN up and carry him to safety, away from GISBOURNE.*

**Mother Tuck**

Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.

Make it into fun.  
 Make one final glory run.

Remember:  
 Give your death panache,  
 Dramatic flash;  
 Don't make a hash when your soul is riding on it.  
 Make a splash.  
 You'll be a smash...  
 Cuz it's your last chance to be immortal!

Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.

Closer to the sky,  
 Hold your chin up high...  
 You're flyin'.  
 Have no doubts.  
 As you're hangin' there,  
 Be free of care.  
 You're light as air as you dangle to and fro.  
 Too late for prayer.  
 Life isn't fair.  
 You've got a rare chance to be immortalized.  
 Be immortalized!

**Chorus**

Stretch up.

Stretch up .

Fun.  
 Glory.  
 Stretch up.

Give your death panache,  
 Dramatic flash;  
 Don't make a hash when your soul is riding on it.  
 Make a splash.  
 You'll be a smash...  
 Cuz it's your last chance to be immortalized!

Stretch up.

Stretch up.

High!  
 You'll be

Stretched up!  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.  
 Heaven!

**Mother Tuck and Lower Chorus Voices**

Don't go unheard.  
 Reach heavenward.  
 Find your reward with a little effort.  
 You can lose your chains;  
 Take hold the reigns;  
 Stretch out your wings,  
 Fly as high as you can master,  
 Flying ever faster,  
 High as you can master.

**Chorus (Higher Voices)**

Stretch up.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up.  
 Stretch up to heaven.  
 Heaven.  
 Heaven!

**Mother Tuck and Lower Chorus Voices**

Stretch it up!  
 Stretch it up!  
 Up to heaven!

**Robin Hood & Tenors**

Stretch it up...high.  
 Stretch it up...high.  
 To heaven!

**Dianah & Sopranos**

Stretch it high!  
 You can fly!  
 Up to heaven!

## "JUMPED INTO THE NOOSE": THE TRAP IS SPRUNG, MUCH IS KILLED, THE KING RETURNS Scene 12

*Recall that after MUCH has locked the SHERIFF's chains, he makes the mistake of slipping the key to MARION. Now, at the song's end, she is holding evidence against her. As the song is ending, GISBOURNE stands and motions for GUARDS to block the exits and flank MARION, in a predetermined manner. The lead GUARD takes from MARION the key.*

Will: *(Worried that they will not escape)* Thank you, good people of Nottingham. And now, we will take our leave.

*Music cue: **STRETCH UP EXIT MUSIC.** The MERRIE MEN performers, with ROBIN, bow one more time, and make their way to an exit. But it is blocked. The courtiers continue to clap and the **EXIT MUSIC** continues to play.*

Will: This way. *(He motions in a different direction, everyone follows. Again the exit is blocked.)* No, that way! *(They all turn again. It appears to be a comical sort of ending to their presentation and the audience titters and claps.)*

*The **EXIT MUSIC** ends, with the <gong> crash. The lead GUARD has freed THE SHERIFF who now takes center stage.*

Sheriff: *(To MERRIE MEN)* Hold where he are! *(To GUARDS, for them to close in on the outlaws)* Guards! *(To DIANAH, the Owl)* Oh, this is a hoot, isn't it? The prodigal daughter returned; and we thought you'd flown the coop. *(To LITTLE JOHN, the Bear)* I was having so much fun, I just couldn't bear interrupting your delicious performance and *(To MERRIE MEN in general)* naive hope that you could actually pull off this elaborate effrontery.

*(To GISBOURNE)* Uncle, I present you a "merry band" of players, unrivaled in their cheek and gall and simple-minded stupidity. *(Unmasking ROBIN, the Fox)* Here, the Sherwood Fox bristling against the inevitable hounds. *(Approaching MARION)* There, the Nottingham Mole, twitching at the approach of the castle cat. *(Motioning to the MERRIE MEN in general)* And the rest, skunks and weasels and all the myriad dung scraped from the forest floor. *(Approaching WILL, unmasking him)* It is a cardinal sin to leave yourself no escape, is it not, Will Scarlet? Worse than being a traitor to your own kind, you twittering fool. *(He motions to all his captives, presenting them to GISBOURNE)* What a feast of fools! The forest's finest!

Gisbourne: *(Applauds the SHERIFF)* If we only had ovens large enough to hold them all!  
*(To ROBIN)* Your parade of martyrs has been most inspiring. I'm sure you will find it an honor to add to their numbers. It seems you have all jumped into the noose. Arrest them all!  
*(Pointing to MARION)* Her, as well.

*As the GUARDS grab MARION, MUCH runs toward her, for no one has bothered noticing him yet.*

Much: Keep your hands off her!

*MUCH leaps at the GUARDS. Seeing this, LITTLE JOHN cries out, "Watch out, child!" and shrugs off the GUARDS trying to restrain him. Other GUARDS hold him back, starting a riot. DIANAHA takes advantage of the confusion and escapes from a GUARD, who wounds her in the shoulder. She recoils, then stabs the GUARD with her (Marion's) dagger, grabbing the guard's spear and pointing it at GISBOURNE.*

Dianah: If we are to die, then I'll take you with us!

*Concerned with LITTLE JOHN's struggle, MUCH cries out "Get 'em, Little John!" and leaps toward him to help. At the same moment, DIANAHA charges GISBOURNE with her spear. GISBOURNE grabs MUCH as he leaps by him and uses him as a shield.*

Little John: Watch out, Dianah! No!

*DIANAHA accidentally pierces MUCH, killing him.*

Little John: Child! *(He shakes off the stunned guards, rushing for the boy. He picks the dead boy up in his arms, overcome with anguish)* Child! *(To himself)* He's been killed! *(To the world)* He's been killed! Cha-ah-ah-ah-ild!

*MARION breaks free from her guards, as well, and rushes over, mourning the child. Suddenly, banners and new SOLDIERS enter the stage, announcing the King. Perhaps a brass FANFARE is heard.*

Herald: Announcing...King Richard! All hail the King!

*Some courtiers kneel, saying "Hail the King." Others are too stunned. GISBOURNE and the now free and bewildered SHERIFF shrink back into the crowd and exit.*

*The KING enters, full of pomp and manly energy. The people are not responding right and he looks around for an explanation. MARION runs to him, crying. He holds her, looking around at the chaos and carnage.*

Richard: What has happened, my child?

Marion: You've come to late...

Richard: Is it...the one called "Robin Hood"?

*MARION shakes her head, unable to speak. KING RICHARD looks about himself, searching for answers. ROBIN walks toward him, then opens up and motions toward the fallen MUCH. KING RICHARD leaves MARION to ROBIN, walks toward MUCH, then surveys the stage. He is beginning to understand.*

Richard: The lad?

Little John: He's...dead, my liege.

*Reading the situation, RICHARD steps center stage and takes advantage of the tragedy.*

Richard: The death of every English subject is a tragedy to the King. That this death occurred in battle, honors the memory of the...*(he momentarily forgets that this is not a speech about one of his fighting men)*...peasant boy. But the meaning of his death, indeed, of every death, is not in how he died; rather, it is in how his memory will change the way we live...

*Music cue: **ONE LESS CHILD.** MOTHER TUCK, ignoring the pomp and speech, moves toward the fallen boy. MARION, remembering DIANA's wound, tends to her as the three of them form a trio of mourners around the boy. The moment is like a dream, like a thought shared by all on stage who knew MUCH. It could even be staged that the KING continues to speak in pantomime, eventually freezing, as the song becomes something shared by the SAXONS and MARION, not touching the NORMANS who are in a different place of thought. MUCH's body is placed as if at a funeral. The WOMAN tend the body. The MERRIE MEN pay their respects to MUCH, processing past or coming toward him in turn and in small groups. WILL separates himself, as if ready to narrate., outside even this dreamlike moment. For him, the "child" is not just MUCH, but his unborn child DIANA will soon be carrying...*

## ONE LESS CHILD

### Mother Tuck:

One more life gone.  
One more wrong.  
One more lesson learned,  
too hard won.

One more mem'ry,  
One less boy.  
One more soul set free,  
one less joy.

One more sorrow,  
One more woe.  
One less healing smile,  
One less child.

One more life gone.  
One more wrong.  
One more lesson learned,  
too hard won.

One more mem'ry,  
One less wish.  
One more soul set free,  
one less kiss.

One more sorrow,  
One more woe.  
One less healing smile,  
One less child.

### Marion:

One more mem'ry,  
One less boy.  
One more soul set free...  
oh.

One more sorrow,  
One more woe.  
One less healing smile,  
One less child.

One day, this will happen no more...  
When life grows all men will see and adore.  
I hope one day, when we grow beyond war,  
One child will remain to restore.

One more mem'ry,  
One less wish.  
One more soul set free...  
oh.

One more sorrow,  
One more woe.  
One less healing smile,  
One less child.

### Women's Chorus:

Freedom. Freedom.  
Freedom...

### Brigid:

Can you hear it now?

### Will:

One less life to love.  
One less heart to know.  
One less spark. One less smile.  
One less child.

### Dianah:

One less life to love.  
One less heart to know.  
One less spark. One less smile.  
One less child.

**"I AM IMPATIENT TO RETURN TO BATTLE":  
KING RICHARD ENLISTS THE MERRIE MEN  
Scene 13**

*KING RICHARD continues his speech as if the song was merely a parenthetical comment.*

Richard: Stand before me, Robin Hood.

*ROBIN reluctantly leaves MARION's side.*

Richard (To ROBIN) Had my niece, Marion, not written me concerning events here in Nottingham, they would not have warranted my attention. Of what importance are simple outlaws to the King? And make no mistake...you are an outlaw. Marion, however, has convinced me of your loyalty. A trustworthy man is a king's most prized possession, especially if he is good with a sword. But a king cannot let the breaking of the law go unpunished. So, to you, Robin Hood, and to your men, I bestow both an honor and a punishment: Upon my return to the Great Expedition, I shall be accompanied by Captain Robin Hood and his collection of former outlaws. Together we shall breach the walls of Jerusalem and set free the Holy City!

*A mixture of gasps and muffled cheers come from the crowd. "True amnesty" can be heard spoken. "By the King's word," says another. MERRIE MEN look toward each other, congratulating themselves once the words sink in.*

Richard: That is...all but one. To the only Norman among you, the careless renegade Will Scarlet, I return his proper title...Sir William of Castleford. *(More reaction from the crowd.)* And along with the administration of his estate, I place an additional burden; one that he may find to be the greatest punishment of all: I name you the new Sheriff of Nottingham. *(Laughter and appreciation are heard from the crowd.)* I trust your great distaste for power shall make you a perfect governor. *(More laughter. The KING suddenly seems bored. He checks himself and nods, content that he has, again, saved the day.)* I trust this sets matters right, again. Now, I am impatient to return to battle... *(Scanning the men before him, he holds their gaze, measuring their strength, then speaks.)* Let us prepare to make history!

*Many cheers. DIANA is angered and hurt and her arm still pains. MARION is chagrined yet resigned. Most MERRIE MEN are eager and filled with patriotism; some tease WILL, others congratulate themselves. NATHAN TANNER doesn't want to go, but his wife pushes him. LITTLE JOHN pays his last respects to MUCH, then goes to ROBIN's side. ROBIN makes his way to MARION, yet is intercepted by the KING, who escorts him off stage. The MEN exit with the KING, leaving the women alone. WILL steps to the side, separated from the men and apart from the women. He narrates the beginning of the next scene to the audience as the scene changes.*

## "EDEN IS ALL AROUND US": IN THE COURTYARD

### Scene 14

Will: You'd think expecting a child of my own would make it easier. Knowing that life goes on. *(He shakes his head, not comforted by the philosophy.)* One child died. One grew up. All the others ran off to play. We mourn deepest when we fail to protect the children. They embody all our hopes, all our dreams. *(He pauses, thinking.)* If we'd just've waited. Or maybe we waited too long...

*The set has dissolved into Marion's courtyard. The WOMEN'S CHORUS and MOTHER TUCK work at chores as MARION goes to check on DIANAHA's shoulder wound, as if this scene has been visited many times in the last months. Perhaps one of the women has just lost a loved one in the war and is comforted. Another may be exhausted in a task, or confused by a new task to which she is unaccustomed.*

Marion: Your wounds have healed well.

Dianah: My wounds will never heal.

Marion: Of course they will.

Dianah: Well, maybe I don't want them to! *(She pulls away from MARION's caring hand.)*

Marion: Dianah, I hold you no ill will.

Dianah: No, you wouldn't. *(She is still guilt-ridden about MUCH's death and externalizing it by reverting to her long-standing hatred of all Normans. In addition to the atrocities of the past, she now blames them for taking both ROBIN and her revolution away from her.)*

Marion: There's already too much suffering. *(She approaches DIANAHA again, finishing up her bandaging.)* Stop blaming yourself for what has happened.

Dianah: Sitting around licking our wounds like whipped dogs won't alleviate much suffering, will it?

Will: *(To the audience)* You don't know what you've missed, Robin. While you were trying in vain to breach the walls of Jerusalem, we were just trying to hold England together. In your vain siege, you burned the countryside, leaving scars that will remain on the land forever. Here, all our scars were self-inflicted.

Marion: You think you've failed.

Dianah: I thought we were going to start a revolution. Change the world. I thought Robin could make it happen. What use is he to Richard, a Norman king, in a war that serves only kings? What does it have to do with England? With Saxon poor? With what we started?

Marion: You and Richard aren't so different. Both of you require someone to bleed. Real revolution will come when we begin seeing each other in a new light, when we change the way people think, the way people fight.

Will: *(To the audience)* Revolution will come only when we change the way we rear our children.

Dianah: One kind of revolution leads to another. None of it can begin without bloodshed.

Marion: Make the last first, the first last. Why not equal? That would be a real revolution. Blood cannot wash us clean. Scars may make us wiser, but only if we learn from them how to heal.

Dianah: This scar is a badge of courage. *(The scar on her shoulder)*



- Marion: Or a burden of hatred.
- Dianah: You, a high born Norman lady. What would you know of burdens?
- Marion: Dianah, King Richard has given his pardon. You are no longer an outlaw. The need for vengeance has passed.
- Dianah: Has the land been returned to its rightful heirs? Are Saxons free to own the labor of their hands? I put my trust in no king. The sword, the arrow, power in the right hands. That is what I trust. That is what Robin used to trust.
- Marion: He also trusts me, and I am none of those things. Robin loves life and fights against everything that holds it down. He believes that all of life belongs to all people, the joys as well as the labors. He is loyal to everyone who shares that love. But his loyalty and enthusiasm sometimes blinds him.
- Dianah: So he blindly marches off to the bottom of the world and all you can do is make excuses for him? He's left us. They've all left us, fighting to recapture some mythical "Jerusalem," just when we were ready to rise up and make a real Promised Land right here. I feel like Eve, kept out of Eden because of some accidental sin, trapped on the wrong side of the Garden wall.
- Mother Tuck: She was punished because of some man, too, and got all the blame. The story never seems to change...
- Dianah: Because it's always told by the winners.
- Mother Tuck: Well, honey, maybe it's time to write a new story. Eve bit that apple and learned the difference between right and wrong. It made her human. She grew up. And after she got kicked out of the Garden, I don't recall her moanin' and groanin' about the good old days. She just planted a new one. Whose to say it didn't bear better fruit?
- (*Music cue: **IN THE GREAT DREAM.***)
- Marion: I don't believe God ever kept Eve out of Eden. She was merely unable to see it, unable to recognize it even when it was all around her. She wandered away, never knowing what was so near. But Eden is right here, inside each of us. The "Holy Land" isn't a place. It's something people make.
- What you longed for happened. You made it happen, you and Robin...and Much...and all the others. Will is Sheriff. Everyone's been pardoned. The people have been given a Great Dream; now you must let everyone enter that dream. Make room for Normans as well as Saxons. There are no walls in Eden. Give up the sword; it's time to wage peace.

*MARION sings to a reluctant yet receptive DIANA. The WOMEN'S CHORUS dance a courtly step, using motions that convey the deeper meaning of the lyrics. By the song's end, MARION's peaceful vision has won the day; DIANA is purged of her anger and guilt; and a bridge has been built between Norman and Saxon women. Left alone to their own devices, they have forged the foundations of democracy.*

# IN THE GREAT DREAM

**Marion:**

Let's wage peace  
In the Great Dream.  
Hate must cease  
In the Great Dream.

Each must be,  
In the Great Dream,  
Equal and free  
In the Great Dream.

There will be room for you;  
There will be room for me.  
If we want, we can make it happen...  
It's in our reach.  
No more killing;  
Show them, instead, how life should be lived.  
Once we're in the Great Dream  
All are meant to be free! Free!

Let's wage peace  
In the Great Dream.  
Hate must cease  
In the Great Dream.

Each must be,  
In the Great Dream,  
Equal and free  
In the Great Dream.

**Marion:**

All of the hurt and fear  
Building from year to year;  
Will the grief be passed on and on,  
Will it never end?  
Break the cycle...  
Don't add to the pain with more of the same.  
Once we're in the Great Dream  
All are meant to be free! Free!

**Marion and Dianah:**

Let's wage peace  
In the Great Dream.  
Hate must cease  
In the Great Dream.

**Women's Chorus:**

You and I and you and I and you and I  
In the Great Dream.  
You and I and you and I and you and I  
In the Great Dream.

You and I and you and I and you and I  
In the Great Dream.  
You and I and you and I and you and I  
In the Great Dream.

You and I and you and I and you and I  
In the Great Dream.  
You and I and you and I and you and I  
In the Great Dream.

Let's wage peace  
In the Great Dream.  
Hate must cease  
In the Great Dream.

Each must be,  
In the Great Dream,  
Equal and free  
In the Great Dream.

Let's wage peace  
In the Great Dream.  
Hate must cease  
In the Great Dream.

Each must be,  
In the Great Dream,  
Equal and free  
In the Great Dream.

Each must be,  
In the Great Dream,  
Equal and free  
In the Great Dream.

You and I and you and I and you and I  
In the Great Dream.

You and I and you and I and you and I  
In the Great Dream.

**Marion and Dianah:**

You and I, now it will start, here, with us.

You and I, here with us, it can begin.

You and I. Let it start.

You and I; of one heart.

*As applause for the song dies, a female or child messenger enters, approaching MARION.*

Messenger: Lady Marion. Word has just come from London. Richard is dead. John has claimed the throne.

Marion: *(Quietly)* Oh, no...

*There is a pause while the news is digested.*

Mother Tuck: Well, that means Gisbourne and company will be moving back, and, I don't know about you other girls, but I ain't stickin' 'round to form a welcoming committee.

Marion: *(Shaking off her shock)* Yes. Ladies, we must all leave. Quickly. Gather together as much as you can.

Dianah: *(Suddenly an idea hits)* Will. I have to get to him before they do.

*All WOMEN exit in varying degrees of panic. Except, perhaps DIANA, who is seeking out WILL. She need not exit before re-entering the scene.*

## **"WALLS": WILL CONFRONTS HIMSELF**

### **Scene 15**

*WILL is left alone, just as he began the show. During the next two scenes, WILL the Narrator evolves into WILL the Actor, as he joins "real time", no longer narrating in narrative past. He is no longer talking to Robin as much as he is talking to himself.*

Will: Who would've dreamt the safety of Will Scarlet would've been so important to her? I couldn't imagine... Was I important to her or to her revolution? You were too far away to help. I was the next in line. Close at hand. A ready arm to raise... When an arrow finds home, they call it true. I never saw it coming.

*DIANA enters.*

Dianah: Will, the King has fallen. Gisbourne's men are back on the march. We must hide, return to Sherwood before they arrive.

*She begins packing for him, not really noticing his sour humor.*

Will: So, your war against the Normans is back on.

- Dianah: This is no time for jokes, Will. Let's get out of here.
- Will: "To Sherwood, the magic domain of Robin Hood! To seek refuge among the Free People of the Forest!" (*He misquotes her speech from Scene 3.*)
- Dianah: Will, the King's dead. They'll be coming for you first.
- Will: The yoke has been lifted from us both. I don't have to be Sheriff anymore; you don't have to pretend we're at peace. The King is dead! Long Live the King!
- She stops and looks at him.*
- Dianah: What's wrong?
- Will: You want to go back. Go back to what? There's no one left...
- Dianah: There'll be hundreds. Marion's with us this time, and other Normans who don't want to return to the way things were. There were more left behind by the Crusades than you think. They need a leader...
- Will: He's on the other side of the world, probably dead, along with Richard...
- Dianah: (*She stiffens*) Robin can't die. He's like Much, he's inside each of us...
- Will: I cannot be Robin Hood...
- Dianah: Of course not. No one expects that. But we do need you...
- Will: Not if they have you. Not even Robin Hood can fire the troupes like you can. He never even really knew what you started. None of us did...
- Dianah: Will...
- Will: And neither do any of the poor fools running back to Sherwood with you right now! Don't you know why I came to Sherwood? Why I ran away from the life I was born to?
- Dianah: Because you couldn't stand being a Norman overlord. (*Jokingly*) You're too honest. (*Seriously*) You wanted to live, and it was killing you. And if you don't run now you're dead for sure!
- Will: One less turncoat.
- Dianah: What's wrong with not wanting to live a lie? I ran away from being a Saxon, because I knew I couldn't be a slave any more. If I hadn't, I never would've found out what it was to be a true freeman, a true Englishman. ...Something you knew from the start.
- Will: Don't pin any wisdom on me. I've never known how to be a "true" anything.
- Dianah: (*After a beat, she changes tactics*) Do you remember that day in the forest when the Sheriff and Gisbourne granted amnesty and Robin headed off to Nottingham in broad daylight? I begged you to follow him, but you stood your ground. You refused to rob him of his right to choose for himself, even if it meant making his own mistakes. Even if it meant losing the dream Sherwood stood for. You let Robin be his own man. I don't know how he did it, but even Richard knew this about you. Just like he said would happen, your distaste for power and hatred for corruption brought balance back to Nottingham. Look at our lives now, Will. Normans and Saxons plow the fields, side by side. We're nursing England back to health. People feel like they have a chance to make their own way again. Not by owning things, but by earning them.

Whatever I thought I wanted, whatever I believed Robin had begun, I never understood it until you put it into words. We all need those words, Will, new words to live by. Words only you can put together. We need you, alive and in Sherwood!

*(She grabs his face.)* Other outlaws might get tired of running, but not you! *(She kisses him impulsively.)* Now, get moving! *(She throws him a disguising dark cloak and turns to leave, expecting him to follow.)* And try not to look so...red. *(She means his blushing cheeks as well as his scarlet attire. Smiling, she exits.)*

*WILL is left perplexed. He puts on the cloak, looking like a nobleman, and strokes the rich fabric. This begins a moment of reverie. Music cue: **WALLS**.*

Will: I've never stopped running because...I've never found anything worth stopping for...

*WILL looks after the exiting DIANA, repeating her words from Scene 7. But he also wonders if maybe he has found something worth stopping for. WILL sings his solo still in his Sheriff's quarters.*

# WALLS

**Will:**

I was once a 'respectable' man,  
Owning gold, owning souls, owning land;  
An existence so parceled and planned.

I hadn't a clue of what freedom meant.  
The power that I held bought its own consent.  
The wealth that I owned, it really owned me,  
Demanded my soul...I had to break free.

So I cast off all petty pretense.  
Turned my back on my inheritance.  
To be true, I've not stopped running since.

I've run from my life. I've run from the strain.  
I've run into walls I could not rename.  
I've raised up my fist. I've cried to the sky.  
No sound echoed back. No words in reply.

There are walls built around all our lives.  
Walls that guard, walls that save, walls that hide.  
Then someone startles you out of the shadows.  
And as you're standing there, gently, your hand opens.  
No walls can save you now. Freedom has found you.  
No walls can hold it back. Where will you go?

I have lived many lives. I've seen too much pain.  
Too much sacrifice. Too little regained.  
I'd stopped asking why. I'd given up hope.  
I never thought I'd find dreams I could hold.

Where, without walls, where will I go?

I've run from my life. I've run from the strain.  
I've run into walls I could not rename.  
I'd stopped asking why. I'd given up hope.  
I never thought I'd find dreams I could hold.

Like the walls, like the walls, I am broken.  
Like a child, like a child, I begin.

I've lived many lives. Done just as I wished.  
I've found many lies. It's truth I've dismissed.  
Now walls that I've built have all fallen in.  
Do I have the strength to start in again?

## "WE CAN CHANGE OUR LIVES": WILL EMBRACES HIMSELF

### Scene 16

*At the end of WALLS, voices are heard of approaching men. Someone shouts, "In here." Other voices join in. WILL backs away from the voices, then turns and runs to the other side of the stage, which, now, represents Sherwood Forest.*

*Once in Sherwood, he is met by NATHAN TANNER, the Merrie Man that always hated to fight. NATHAN has been hiding a long time and is tentative yet happy to see a familiar face.*

Nathan: Will? Is that you? By Christ's wounds, you're alive!

Will: Nathan? I thought you were with Robin...

Nathan: *(Sheepishly)* Well, I didn't quite make it all the way... You know me and fighting. But I been keepin' the camp...

Will: All this time?

Nathan: Don't tell no one, okay. I jus' come back early, so far as the rest of 'em thinks.

*They embrace and laugh.*

Nathan: You gonna take the lead against this new King, right? Ain' none of us can read...and we don't trust the new Normans here. There's Normans with us this time, you wouldn't believe it...

Will: There isn't going to be any "leading" against anyone, Nathan. If I can keep us all hidden and alive, I'll have done more than we can rightly hope for...

Nathan: I don't know, Will. I think maybe I'm even ready to raise the bow. I'm kinda sick of runnin'.

Will: You? Nathan Tanner?

Nathan: *(Sheepishly again, and uncertain)* Times change people, sometimes...

Dianah: *(Enters from opposite side.)* We've all changed, Will.

Will: ...Dianah...

*As WILL and DIANAHA stare into each other's eyes, NATHAN gets uncomfortable and makes up an excuse to leave.*

Nathan: Well, I, ah, better tell the others you're here. Sure glad to see you again, Will. *(Exit.)*

Dianah: *(Breaking the silence)* I was afraid you'd been caught.

Will: *(He laughs warmly.)* You? Afraid? Not likely.

*They laugh together, sharing the warmth.*

Will: But I'd be less afraid if all these people would just go back home and forget...

Dianah: Safe lives or free lives. People must choose for themselves.

Will: It won't work, Dianah. You might call it a dream. But it's a lie. They'll all die throwing themselves against some castle wall somewhere, and for what?

Dianah: It won't work without you.

Will: Then everybody loses. Dianah, I've stopped playing games...

*Music cue: **WE CAN CHANGE OUR LIVES**, the instrumental introduction.*

Dianah: It's not about winning or losing anymore. It's about being free, plain and simple. Even if we're only free for one last fight, how else are we supposed to know who we are? What it's like to be a real human being? They felt it while you were Sheriff. Living at no one else's bidding but our own. You're the one that embodies the dream for them...

Will: Me? I'm the one who snores, remember? I can't even decide who I am, what I believe. I'm nobody's dream. You're the one who...

Dianah: I'm the one who screams and kicks. You're the one who stops to think. Between us...

*After a pause, she kisses him, gently. WILL sings the short recitative.*

**Will:**

Can we change the world?

I don't know.

Things have been the same for so long now.

How can we be sure?

No one will want to share our dream...

**Dianah:**

We can change our lives, that's enough, all we need.

Open other's eyes with our deeds.

*DIANA H speaks over the music.*

Dianah: Look around you, Will. What do you think brought all these people here? Who do you think they're waiting for? They believe in you, whether you do or not. So do I.

*As she speaks, MARION, NATHAN and the new recruits filter in, ready for WILL to lead.*

## WE CAN CHANGE OUR LIVES

**Dianah:**

We can change our lives.

You've shown us how.

We have seen a way

to live life now.

Look what we have gained...

Made a place where new life can reign.

**Marion:**

We can make a dream,

a great dream live.

That is what we bring,

what we can give.



**Nathan, Marion, Dianah,**

We can show them how to begin,  
that they can win...

**Dianah:**

We can change our lives;  
change them now.  
Throw away the chains;  
free us all.

Shine her light 'cross the land!

We can change the world;  
change it now.  
Throw away the chains;  
free us all.

Shine her light 'cross the land!

**Will:**

Can you see a world  
without walls, opened wide?  
Everyone at peace  
side by side.

**add Nathan & MEN:**

We can show them how to begin,  
that they can win...

**Will & Dianah:**

We can change our lives;  
change them now.  
Throw away the chains;  
free us all.

Shine her light 'cross the land!

We can change the world;  
change it now.  
Throw away the chains;  
free us all.

Shine her light 'cross the land!

...Let freedom in!

**Marion:**

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

**Mother Tuck:**

Can you see a world  
free at last?  
Equal and allied,  
sure and fast.  
Remake every flaw from the past;  
Can we make it last?

**Dianah:**

Can you hear it ring!  
Ring! Ring!

**add Marion:**

Can you hear it ring!

**add Mother Tuck:**

Can you hear it ring!  
Hear the call! Hear the call!

**Marion, Tuck & MEN:**

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

...Let freedom in!

**Nathan & Mother Tuck:**

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!  
Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!  
Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land

**MEN:**

Freedom. Freedom.

Freedom. Freedom.

Remake the past;  
Can we make it last?.

**WOMEN:**

Freedom.

Freedom.

We can show how to begin,  
that they can win...

**WOMEN:**

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!  
Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

Let freedom in!

Let freedom in!  
Let freedom  
Shine her light 'cross the land!

...Let freedom in!

## "A DUEL OF CHAMPIONS": ROBIN RETURNS AND THE PEOPLE UNITE

### Scene 17

*As WILL narrates to Robin, the encampment is alive with activity, perhaps staging little bits that accent certain lines and add humor. Mostly they are happily at work, making bows and food and clothing, helping each other out, not necessarily being efficient or productive in the process.*

Will: The rumor that Sherwood was back in business brought scores of hungry peasants flooding into the forest. I think every one of them expected to find you here, judging from the disappointment in their eyes when I tell them you're still at the Crusades. No one even asks if there's been news of you. They'd rather go on in ignorance than learn of news that might speak of your death. Better to hope, I guess. Isn't it amazing how we hope beyond hope? How we lean toward faith in the face of sure defeat, with the world about to crash in around us? It does make it easier to have a good time, though, and we've been having a lot of good times lately...but I already told you I'm going to be a father. It hasn't slowed Dianah down at all. I think she feels like she's the expectant mother of a new nation. And Mother Tuck, *hm!*, she's had ample opportunities at bringing sinners into her bosom. Strikes a good balance, she does, dispensing penance when necessary. I'm glad she's here; I've always hated disciplining anyone. ...Between you and me, though, I've just been killing time. Certainly killing no soldiers. And I hope it never comes to that. These are not fighting men. I'm not sure what I'll do if Gisbourne ever catches up with us... In the meantime, I've been doing some writing, sharpening the pen instead of the sword, you might say. You know me and words. Whenever I get a moment to myself, I've been working on this new idea that Dianah came up with: A charter of English law, based on some things we've talked about while you've been away...

Nathan: Will! Come meet some newcomers. They look pretty torn up, but I don't think we'll need to teach them how to wield a sword.

Will: More veterans from Richard's wars? Bring them.

*In disguise, LITTLE JOHN helps a limping, tired ROBIN on stage, followed by the last remnant of the MERRIE MEN that King Richard had taken to the Crusades. ROBIN's attire might include a makeshift crutch, an eye patch, and something to cover his hair.*

Robin: *(Speaking in an accent to disguise his voice)* Is this the home of that no good bunch of thievin' outlaws?

Will: You must be looking for those who currently dwell at Nottingham Castle.

Robin: Must be, cuz I was plannin' on thankin' em' fer gittin' rid a that do nuthin' sheriff they had a while back. Sorry piece a work, he was. Least now we got some action goin' on, heh?

Will: Nathan, whose side did you say these strangers were on?

Robin: Anybody who prances around in red ought not call his brother strange? *(He throws off his disguise.)* Unless it's the infamous Will Scarlet!

Will: Robin!

*The men embrace. Everyone ad libs greetings. ROBIN is not well; his hair is wet from sweat and fever, he is grey and tired. His limp was not merely a ploy to make his disguise more realistic. He suffers from numerous wounds, as do many of the others who have returned with him.*

Robin: You used to spot my disguises a mile off. Out of practice, I guess.

Will: Is it all disguise? You look...tired.

Little John: Robin has had... (*ROBIN waves him off, refusing to let his problems get in the way.*)

Robin: You look sound and strong, Will. And the camp, it's as if we never left.

Will: You can thank Nathan for that.

*WILL and NATHAN exchange a knowing glance.*

Nathan: An' we got more men in the caves and hiding spots than ever before. It's an army...

Will: Which we hope we'll never have to use. We're hoping for an audience with John.

Robin: An audience?

Will: To present a petition...for civil law.

Marion: (*Entering, she sees ROBIN for the first time.*) Robin! (*She runs to him and they embrace and kiss.*)

*As MARION and ROBIN have their long awaited reunion, WILL takes LITTLE JOHN aside.*

Will: Little John, his weathered appearance is no disguise, is it. How bad is he?

Little John: (*Shaking his head*) We're lucky to have made it at all. The fever's sapped his strength and his wounds won't heal. But I fear he'll never find the rest he needs.

Will: We've plenty to feast on. Our absence these last two summers enabled the deer to overrun the greenwood.

Little John: (*He laughs at the memory of real meat.*) Deer will taste sweet. (*He pats WILL on the shoulder, burdened by the news not yet told to the encampment.*) But news we bear is sour.

Will: After we heard of Richard's death, I figured the Crusades would not fare well.

Little John: Not the Crusades, dear friend. Closer to home... (*He revels in being "home" again, even though he is worried about what their news will bring.*)

*ROBIN raises his voice to gather everyone around him. He is hoarse and visibly weak, yet cheerful and brave. The returning MERRIE MEN speak to each other and some other men as ROBIN speaks, filling in the details.*

Robin: Your good cheer and readiness will soon be needed. Sooner than you think. Gisbourne is coming. And it is not just the Sheriff's bumbling men that accompany him. Five hundred soldiers fell upon our heels as soon as we approached the forest. And they seem to know their way.

Nathan: Spies!

Robin: (*To NATHAN*) It's too late to cast about for reasons. (*To ALL*) It is good to be back among you again. I wish I brought better news.

Nathan: We must meet them or be scattered. Robin, you're 'ere in the nick a time. (*To everyone*) Ready your weapons, friends!

*Robin is drowned out by the shouting. He and WILL and DIANA and MARION are lost in the chaos that follows. They gather on one side of the stage. The Sheriff's SOLDIERS enter from the other side. The*

*SHERIFF organizes his SOLDIERS. They fall into formation, and present arms. GISBOURNE enters, carrying an impressive scroll that he hands to the SHERIFF. They confer briefly. The SHERIFF steps up and raises his voice, speaking to the outlaws he knows must be hiding in the trees around them.*

*WILL shows ROBIN where to hide, followed by LITTLE JOHN. DIANA, having no weapon, hides with MARION.*

Sheriff: I bare a letter from King John the First, demanding the immediate surrender of the outlaw "Robin Hood" and all his compatriots.

Robin: *(ROBIN looks around at those who hide with him, then replies, yelling hoarsely from his place of concealment.)* On what charge?

Sheriff: The charge of...treason!

Robin: We have committed no crime.

Sheriff: You must be joking. You're planning a bloody revolution!

Robin: *(He confers with WILL.)* These are simple men who only wish to defend themselves. All they want is to be full citizens of England, with all the rights a citizen should possess.

*As ROBIN speaks, between each sentence, LITTLE JOHN and WILL positions groups strategically around the stage.*

Sheriff: Like I said, your planning a bloody revolution!

*WILL shrugs, as if to say, "He's got a point."*

Robin: It will be bloody only if *you* choose it.

Gisbourne: *(Impatiently taking over for the Sheriff)* No bloodshed? Stop wasting our time. Come out of that wretched forest and surrender.

Robin: If we lay down our arms, you will slaughter us like cattle. If you try to take us, we will merely slaughter each other. Why don't you order your army to help rebuild England, instead of tear her apart?

Gisbourne: Yes, well, I'm sure the King would be interested in the specifics of your platform. I could arrange an audience...

*WILL leans toward ROBIN, as if to confer about an audience, but ROBIN holds him back, replying.*

Robin: Why ask the King? Ask your men! It is their blood. Their land. Most of them were once farmers and craftsmen...

Gisbourne: *(He looks incredulously at the SHERIFF.)* Ask my men? *(To ROBIN)* Are you mad?

Robin: My men have always chosen for themselves.

*The SOLDIERS react to this. It strikes a chord with them, as it does with the SHERIFF.*

Gisbourne: Ha! You *are* mad. I would pit your "freedom" against my power any day!

Robin: Then, so be it!

*ROBIN jumps out of concealment and confronts GISBOURNE. He struggles not to faint and wipes the sweat from his forehead. His mouth is dry and his eyes are slow in focusing. MARION must be constrained by DIANA to not expose herself, as well.*

Marion: Robin! No! You aren't well.

Little John: Don't, Robin. *(Spoken over MARION's line.)*

*WILL follows ROBIN, and DIANA follows WILL, taking his arm, counseling to let ROBIN play out his hand. From another angle LITTLE JOHN steps toward ROBIN but is cut off by a line of SOLDIERS. He is joined by MOTHER TUCK, staff in hand. GISBOURNE is flustered, but regains composure. The SOLDIERS take a step back, then watch, warily.*

Robin: I'm sick of war. Sick of men being led into battles that should never have happened in the first place. No more innocent blood. How 'bout just you and me. A battle of champions. Winner takes all. *(Robin is panting and sweaty from fever. He waves the tip of his sword in the GISBOURNE's face, unsteady, challenging him.)*

Gisbourne: *(He is not baited by the taunt.)* A duel? Between you and I? Nonsense! *(To SOLDIERS)* Who will complete our crusade against this villain? *(No answer.)* Who will be Nottingham's champion? *(No answer.)* Well, you don't expect me to fight him, do you?

Sheriff: That is what you implied, Uncle.

Gisbourne: Not even you, Nephew?

Sheriff: I've done your bidding for you my whole life long, carrying out all your dirty little schemes and keeping all your dirty little secrets. I've had enough! This was your idea. If you want to fight him, do it yourself.

Gisbourne: Then give me that sword, you fool!

*Angered, GISBOURNE lashes out at the SHERIFF and grabs his sword, suddenly swinging it at ROBIN, who is unprepared. His first blow knocks ROBIN over. GISBOURNE swings at ROBIN several more times as ROBIN blocks the blows and rolls free. All the while GISBOURNE is screaming insane ad libs. Finally, GISBOURNE knocks ROBIN's sword away, then raises his own for the final blow. Just then, unseen by anyone, the overlooked STOOL BOY rushes forward and picks up ROBIN's sword, placing it between ROBIN and GISBOURNE in the nick of time.*

Stool Boy: No! *(GISBOURNE's sword clangs against ROBIN's.)* I won't let you kill him! I'll fight you myself before I let him die!

*Now it is the STOOL BOY who carries the most rage. Fearing for his uncle's life, the SHERIFF moves to intervene, pulling out a hidden dagger. But WILL detains him, disarms him, and holds him with the dagger. LITTLE JOHN takes his lead and forces the SOLDIERS, with MOTHER TUCK's help; the SOLDIERS hold their hands up as if they have no intention of getting involved.*

Will: *(To the SHERIFF)* Seems your little stool pigeon has flown the coop!

Sheriff: *(Lying)* I was just going to help him finish the old man off...

Will: Is that so? Then be my guest. *(WILL gets the SHERIFF in position near the STOOL BOY so that the STOOL BOY's line [\*] can be addressed to the SHERIFF near by.)*

*The STOOL BOY is clumsy but effective. The crowd ad libs as the battle goes to and fro. Finally, the STOOL BOY flips away GISBOURNE's sword. GISBOURNE falls on his knees.*

Stool Boy: Without your servants, you're nothing, you sorry little man! On your knees! *(Suddenly, he turns around and points ROBIN's sword at the SHERIFF, who has been positioned by WILL.)*  
\*You too, you cat's paw coward. No feathers in your claws this time, Sheriff! Now go get that stool and set it at my feet. I want you to know what it feels like to lug that stupid thing around... before I finish you off! Hurry!

*Realizing he must do as he is told, the SHERIFF fetches the stool. As the SHERIFF sets the stool down, the STOOL BOY knocks GISBOURNE forward so the his chest is positioned on the stool with his head hanging over the edge, as if he were about to be beheaded. But before he raises the sword to cut it off, he speaks to the SHERIFF.)*

Stool Boy: Kings and pawns end up in the same box once the game is over, don't they, Sheriff? Don't worry, your turn will come soon enough.

*GISBOURNE twists to see what is happening, but the STOOL BOY's foot pushes him back into position.*

Stool Boy: Stay still. Servants aren't to be noticed, just...felt. *(He says this in a NORMAN accent, as if this was what they always told him before a lashing.)*

*Just as the BOY prepares to chop off GISBOURNE's head, DIANAH races toward them and stays his hand.*

Dianah: Stop! There's been enough killing! *(She bends down and takes GISBOURNE's official lordly medallion from around his neck. She speaks to him coldly.)* No one will follow him any longer. *(The she speaks boldly to the gathering.)* He's already finished. *(She holds the medallion aloft.)* Let this medallion stand for justice, from this day forward. Will, come and claim what is rightfully yours.

Will: No, Dianah. You were right all along. Let the people choose.

Stool Boy: *(Runs up and grabs the medallion.)* Freedom!

The Crowd: Freedom!

*Everyone cheers and laughs and celebrates. Music cue: **LET FREEDOM IN - FINALE.** LITTLE JOHN lifts the STOOL BOY to his shoulders and presents him to the crowd. WILL and DIANAH embrace. MARION tends to ROBIN. The SHERIFF, who was cowering, bops GISBOURNE on the head with the scroll. MOTHER TUCK comes over and comforts GISBOURNE, beginning the process of rehabilitation. Everyone is happy. All this happens as the narrators finish the story and the cast gets in position for the finale.*

## LET FREEDOM IN - FINALE

<b>Bass:</b>	<b>Tenor:</b>	<b>Alto:</b>	<b>Soprano:</b>
We're free men all.			
	We're free men all. We're free men all.	We're free men all.	
We heed the call	We heed the call We heed the call	We heed the call	We're free men all.
of Robin Hood, Robin. Before us all	of Robin Hood, Robin.	of Robin Hood, Robin.	We heed the call of Robin Hood, Robin.
	Before us all Before us all	Before us all	
The weak stand tall			Before us all
	The weak stand tall The weak stand tall	The weak stand tall	
with Robin Hood, Robin Hood!	with Robin Hood, Robin. We can change the world, change it now.	with Robin Hood, Robin. We can change the world, change it now.	The weak stand tall with Robin Hood, Robin Hood!
Hood!	Robin		Robin
	Throw away the chains, free us all. Now!	Throw away the chains, free us all.	Hood!
Can you hear it now!		Can you hear it now!	
	Let freedom in!		Let freedom in!

*Bows.*