

THE ADVENTURES OF LITTLE RED ROBIN HOOD

A one-act comedy by
Katherine Dubois

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

KING RICHARD I

LITTLE RED ROBIN HOOD, female.

GRANDMA, female.

ARTHUR DALE, a developer, probably male but could be female.

SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM

WORMAN, his deputy.

BISHOP OF HEREFORD

TUCK, Robin's Merry Maiden.

JILL SCARLET, Robin's Merry Maiden.

LITTLE JOAN, Robin's Merry Maiden.

MARIAN, female.

SIR GUY OF GISBOURNE, male.

WOLF, female.

PRINCE JOHN

SETTING

Sherwood Forest. 12th century.

NOTES

All roles for which a gender is not specified could be played by an actor of either gender.

(The scene represents Sherwood Forest. A backdrop with trees; a hollow trunk big enough for someone to hide in; a few free-standing trees to hide behind.)

(Another playing area is Grandma's cottage. This can be on an apron or on a platform that can be rolled or slid into position when needed. It represents a porch with a rocking chair and a door to the interior of the cottage.)

(KING RICHARD enters.)

KING RICHARD: Boy, it sure feels great to be back in merrie olde England. I wonder how John's been doing taking care of my kingdom while I've been gone? Wait—here comes someone. I think I won't tell anyone I'm back just yet.

(He hides behind a tree. Enter ROBIN and GRANDMA. Robin wears the obligatory red cape and hood; Grandma the typical shawl and puffy cap.)

GRANDMA: Robin, I can't thank you and your friends enough for patching that leak in the roof.

ROBIN: You know we're always happy to help, Grandma. Your cottage has been in the family forever.

GRANDMA: I don't know how much longer it will be. The property taxes are going up again, and I just don't know how I'm going to pay them.

ROBIN: What will happen if you can't pay?

GRANDMA: The Sheriff will seize the cottage and I won't have anyplace to live.

ROBIN: Grandma, that's terrible.

GRANDMA: If only King Richard were back. I'm sure *he'd* never let this happen.

(At the mention of his name, King Richard pokes his head out from behind the tree, then hides again.)

ROBIN: I'll get the money for you, Grandma. I don't know how, but—I'll think of something. Don't worry.

GRANDMA: You're such a sweet child.

ROBIN: Good-bye, Grandma. I'll see you next weekend.

(She skips off. Enter ARTHUR DALE. He approaches Grandma.)

DALE: Excuse me, Ma'am. I'm Arthur Dale, with Sherwood Realty, a subsidiary of Sherwood Development. My card.

(He hands her his card.)

I couldn't help overhearing you talking with your granddaughter just now—charming child. It so happens I may be able to help.

GRANDMA: Well, that's very kind, but—you don't know me.

DALE: If I'm not mistaken, you own one of the cottages along the stream, isn't that so?

GRANDMA: Yes, the one next to the path.

DALE: Charming dwelling. Prime location. Now, Sherwood Development has a proposal before the county council to build Nottingham Estates, luxury condos along the stream; there'll be a swimming pool, tennis courts, shopping mall, a golf course—

GRANDMA: Where are you going to find room for a golf course?

DALE: Well, a few of the trees will have to come down. Quite a few.

GRANDMA: You're going to cut down the forest for a golf course?

DALE: Well—

GRANDMA: And how does this affect me?

DALE: Sherwood Realty would like to purchase your cottage and the land it's on.

GRANDMA: Sell you my cottage?

DALE: Yes.

GRANDMA: And live in one of your new condos?

DALE: Well, no, I doubt you could afford one of the condos. But you could rent a quite reasonable hovel—er, apartment—in town, and then you'd never have to worry about property taxes again. Or yardwork.

GRANDMA: I have xeriscaping.

DALE: Or gardening.

GRANDMA: I love my garden.

DALE: Or that long walk into town.

GRANDMA: Fresh air and exercise is what keeps me healthy.

DALE: We're willing to make you an extremely reasonable offer.

GRANDMA: I think not, Mr. Dale.

DALE: Well, well, you give it some thought, why don't you? If the property is auctioned off to pay the taxes, the money will go to the Sheriff, not to you.

(He tips his hat and leaves. Grandma also exits. King Richard comes out from behind the tree.)

KING RICHARD: A golf course? Hmm. I'm not sure I like the sound of that. Oh, here comes someone else.

(He hides again. Enter the SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM and WORMAN, his Deputy. The Sheriff carries a bag of coins.)

SHERIFF: *(Hypocritically, dabbing at a fake tear in the corner of his eye:)* Poor Sir Gilbert, may he rest in peace.

WORMAN: Poor Sir Gilbert's widow, I say; since you've taken all his money.

SHERIFF: Why, Worman, haven't you ever heard of estate taxes before?

WORMAN: No.

SHERIFF: That's because I just made them up!

(They laugh.)

Ah, taxes, taxes. There's always something you can tax, Worman.

WORMAN: Wow, Sir. How do you come up with all these ideas?

SHERIFF: It's part of the job, Worman. It's because of ideas like mine that I'm the Sheriff and you're the Deputy.

WORMAN: You mean, if I came up with some good ideas, maybe I'd be—?

SHERIFF: Don't push your luck, Worman.

WORMAN: Sorry, Sir.

(Enter the BISHOP OF HEREFORD. The Bishop's costume should be well-padded to make him a very portly gentleman.)

BISHOP: Sheriff? Ah, there you are, Sheriff. *(He stops a moment to catch his breath.)* A moment, if you please. A small

oversight—but that money belongs to me. Er, I mean, to the church.

(He takes the bag of coins from the Sheriff.)

SHERIFF: Saving Your Worship's reverence, but these are the taxes from Sir Gilbert's estate.

(He takes back the coins.)

BISHOP: Actually, no.

(Takes the coins.)

SHERIFF: Not meaning any disrespect to Your Worship, but: yes.

(Takes the coins.)

BISHOP: There's been a new—development. A new will has just been found, in which Sir Gilbert left everything to the church.

(He shows a piece of parchment to the Sheriff.)

And of course the church is tax-exempt.

SHERIFF: *(Looking at the parchment:)* The ink's still wet on this.

BISHOP: So?

SHERIFF: Sir Gilbert died three days ago.

BISHOP: It's a miracle!

(He takes the bag of coins from the Sheriff and crosses toward the other side of the stage.)

SHERIFF: But—wait—you can't—

WORMAN: I think he just did.

SHERIFF: Why does that man always get the better of me?

WORMAN: Because he has better ideas?

(The Sheriff gives Worman a look and wads the parchment into a ball. He and Worman exit in the other direction. As the Bishop reaches the edge of the stage, he stops and peers into the mouth of the bag of coins. Robin enters.)

ROBIN: *(Little-girl voice:)* Good afternoon, Your Worship.

(She bobs a curtsey.)

BISHOP: Hello, little girl. What are you doing alone in the woods?

ROBIN: Oh, my friends aren't far away. Isn't it a pretty day? Look at that cloud up in the sky, it looks just like a castle.

(She points directly above their heads; the Bishop looks up.)

See? There's the tower, with a flag flying from the very tippy top of it. And you can see the drawbridge...

(As the Bishop cranes his neck studying the clouds, the rest of the "Merry Maidens" sneak in and surround him: TUCK, JILL SCARLET, and LITTLE JOAN.)

...and there's a dragon in the moat!

BISHOP: Um...yes. Quite an imagination you've got, little girl. *(He looks at her.)* What's your name?

ROBIN: *(Pulling back the hood of her cloak to reveal a cap with a feather:)* They call me Robin.

(She pulls a sword on the Bishop.)

BISHOP: *(Crying in dismay:)* Little Red Robin Hood! Oh no!

(He turns to flee and realizes he's surrounded. Drops to his knees.)

Oh, don't hurt me. Please don't hurt me.

JILL SCARLET: Hand over the money.

(Robin holds out her basket and the Bishop drops the bag of coins into it. Robin and her gang flee.)

BISHOP: Help! Help! I've been robbed! Help! Sheriff!

(Sheriff and Worman come running back on.)

It's Little Red Robin Hood! Arrest her!

(Sheriff, Worman, and then the Bishop run after Robin. King Richard comes out of hiding and follows them. A beat. Enter MARIAN, followed by GUY OF GISBOURNE.)

MARIAN: Will you stop following me?

GUY: But, Marian—since we're going to be married, don't you want to get to know me a little?

MARIAN: Why didn't you get to know me before you went and asked my father for permission to marry me?

GUY: I was just trying to do things properly. I didn't know you'd have any objections.

MARIAN: Of course I have objections. I don't want to get married.

GUY: Lots of girls would be happy to marry me. It's not every girl who lands a husband like me, Guy of Gisbourne.

MARIAN: Will you please leave me alone?

GUY: Did that sound stuck up? I didn't mean to sound stuck up. But I'm nervous, and sometimes when I'm nervous I—well, things don't come out the way I mean them. Please, will you marry me, Marian?

MARIAN: I—I need more time. By myself. To—think about it.

GUY: All right, Marian. I'll go back to your father's house.

(Exit Guy.)

MARIAN: I don't want to get married. And certainly not to a man I only met for the first time the day before yesterday. I'll run away. I'll run away and hide in the forest. I'll disguise myself, as a – as a shepherdess. That's it. He'll never find me.

(She exits. Grandma enters, then Robin enters and crosses to her.)

ROBIN: Here you go, Grandma. The money for the taxes.

GRANDMA: Why, what a dear girl you are. But where on earth did you get this?

ROBIN: Um – my friends and I gathered sticks and sold them for firewood.

GRANDMA: What a clever child you are. Oh, look. Here comes the Sheriff. I'll pay him now, and then I won't have to worry about losing my cottage.

ROBIN: I think I'd better go, Grandma. The Sheriff doesn't like me very much.

GRANDMA: Doesn't like you? You haven't been doing anything naughty, have you?

ROBIN: My friends and I – kind of played a little trick on him, once.

GRANDMA: Now, Robin.

ROBIN: Bye, Grandma.

(She exits. Grandma opens the mouth of the bag and peers in. The WOLF enters stealthily, starts to sneak up on Grandma, then stops and hides behind a tree as the Sheriff and Worman enter.)

SHERIFF: They got away!

GRANDMA: *(Going to them:)* Excuse me, what did you say?

SHERIFF: I said, what a lovely day. You haven't seen your granddaughter, have you?

GRANDMA: I have the money for the taxes on my cottage.

SHERIFF: (*Taking the bag of coins:*) Ah. Very good, very good.

(*Grandma exits. Enter PRINCE JOHN.*)

Oh! Your Highness.

(*He and Worman bow.*)

PRINCE JOHN: Which one of you is the Sheriff of Nottingham?

SHERIFF: (*Bowing his way across the stage:*) That's me, Your Highness. At your service. And how may your humble servant be of assistance today?

PRINCE JOHN: I've come to collect the revenue due to the crown.

(*He plucks the bag of coins out of the Sheriff's hand.*)

SHERIFF: (*More bowing:*) Excuse me, Your Highness. Terribly sorry to – but some of that belongs to –

PRINCE JOHN: Is this all? I expected more. Why isn't there more?

WORMAN: As they say, Your Highness, you can't get blood out of a turnip.

SHERIFF: Quiet, you fool. Is that any way to speak before Prince John? Your Highness, I'm terribly sorry – (*Bow.*)

WORMAN: And then when we do get our hands on anything, Little Red Robin Hood and her band –

SHERIFF: Hush! Pay no attention to my fool of a deputy, Your Highness.

PRINCE JOHN: Is this really all you've got?

(Enter Arthur Dale.)

DALE: Excuse me. I couldn't help overhearing...

PRINCE JOHN: Who are you?

DALE: Arthur Dale, with Sherwood Development. My card.

(Hands him a card.)

We're entirely in sympathy with the crown's fiscal woes, and may be able to offer a solution.

PRINCE JOHN: What solution?

DALE: These trees.

PRINCE JOHN: These trees can make me money?

DALE: Erm – no. Rather the lack of them.

PRINCE JOHN: *Not* having these trees can make me money?

DALE: Picture to yourself luxury condominiums, a shopping mall, a country club.

PRINCE JOHN: All right.

DALE: Much higher tax base than cottages.

SHERIFF: Where are these condominiums and shopping malls coming from?

DALE: Sherwood Development. My card.

(Hands him a card.)

SHERIFF: You're building them?

DALE: We'd like to. If we can acquire the properties.

SHERIFF: What about the land that belongs to the crown? The forest itself?

DALE: We've applied for a permit.

SHERIFF: And the cottages—?

DALE: Unfortunately, some of their owners don't want to part with them.

PRINCE JOHN: There isn't any way to *make* them—

DALE: Actually, Your Highness, there is. If Your Highness would be willing to condemn all the properties along the stream, the Sheriff could have them seized, hand them over to us—for an agreeable commission—and building could begin. And then the money would just pour in.

PRINCE JOHN: So you'd cut down the trees, and pull down the cottages, and build these other things?

DALE: Exactly.

PRINCE JOHN: Wouldn't that sort of be the end of the forest?

DALE: Well, yes.

PRINCE JOHN: (*Considers a moment.*) All right. (*To Sheriff:*) Give him the authority he needs.

(They exit. The Wolf comes out of hiding and lurks in the opposite direction, but before she's offstage, Dale re-enters.)

DALE: Excuse me. I'm looking for a cottage belonging to a woman known as "Grandma." I seem to have lost my bearings in these woods. That's another trouble with trees, they block the view.

WOLF: (*Pointing:*) Just follow this path.

DALE: Thank you. (*Starts to exit.*)

WOLF: But—before you go there, may I make a suggestion?

DALE: What's that?

WOLF: Maybe you could pick some flowers in the woods and bring her a bouquet.

DALE: Flowers are a good idea, but I've been told it isn't safe to stray too far from the path. There's robbers —

WOLF: (*Giving him a pointed look:*) There certainly are robbers about in the woods these days.

DALE: Flowers might distract her. I hate it when they make a fuss. (*Looking about him:*) I suppose I wouldn't have to go *very* far off the path... (*He stoops to pick an imaginary flower, stops to sniff it.*)

WOLF: (*To audience:*) Now I'll get to the cottage first.

(She exits quickly. Dale exits in the same direction, but wandering, his eyes on the ground.)

(The scene changes to Grandma's cottage. She is sweeping the porch. The Wolf creeps up behind her; she doesn't see. The Wolf gets very close.)

Psst. Grandma.

(Grandma turns, gives a little shriek.)

GRANDMA: Oh, you startled me. I didn't hear you come up behind me.

(They hug.)

How are things in the forest?

WOLF: Not good. If we don't put a stop to it, the woodsmen with their axes will be cutting down the whole forest.

GRANDMA: Woodsmen? You mean Al the lumberjack, in his plaid flannel shirt? He only cuts the dead trees, or thins the trees where they're too crowded.

WOLF: No, this would be a fellow in a business suit who would bring in workmen to cut down *all* the trees.

GRANDMA: Oh, you mean that man who wants to build condos? Don't you worry about a thing. I told him no. I'm not selling.

WOLF: The property's been condemned.

GRANDMA: What does that mean?

WOLF: It means they can take it from you whether you want to sell or not.

GRANDMA: But I've just paid the taxes.

WOLF: That won't stop them.

GRANDMA: Then what am I going to do?

WOLF: I have an idea.

(She whispers in Grandma's ear.)

GRANDMA: Well, it's worth a try.

(She takes off her cap and shawl and gives them to the Wolf.)

I'm going to try to find Robin.

(She exits. The Wolf puts on the cap and shawl, and sits in the rocking chair. Enter Arthur Dale.)

DALE: *(With a little bow:)* So we meet again, Madam. Flowers?

(He offers her a small bouquet. The Wolf gives a little growl.)

I'm terribly sorry to inform you of this, but the government has condemned this property. You have two days to vacate the premises. You will, of course, receive meager compensation for your trouble.

(He comes closer and hands her a folded parchment. He looks more closely.)

My, what large eyes you have, Madam.

WOLF: The better to see you with, good Sir.

DALE: Well, then I'm sure you won't have any trouble perusing this document. And—what large ears you have, Madam.

WOLF: The better to hear you with, good Sir.

DALE: I'm sorry you didn't lend a more sympathetic ear to my previous offer. You'd have made out better if you'd sold willingly.

(The Wolf snarls, showing her teeth.)

Oh, and excuse my being so personal, Madam, but what large teeth you have.

WOLF: The better to *eat* you with, you robbing swine!

(The Wolf jumps up, throwing off the cap and shawl. Dale gives a cry of alarm and runs away. The chase circles around the porch post, around the chair, around one of the trees, and offstage. A beat. The scene shifts to the forest. Enter King Richard.)

KING RICHARD: Can you believe it? I got lost in my own forest while I was trying to follow the others. They got too far ahead of me. But wait—someone's coming.

(He hides. Enter Robin, Little Joan, Tuck, and Jill Scarlet.)

ROBIN: Well, I gave the bag of money to Grandma so she could pay the property taxes.

LITTLE JOAN: I couldn't stand it if your Grandma lost her home. Your grandma's wonderful.

JILL SCARLET: Yeah. Your grandma's the greatest, Robin.

TUCK: She said she'd teach me how to make those yummy acorn cookies she bakes. They're the best.

ROBIN: What shall we do now? Little Joan?

LITTLE JOAN: We haven't played jump rope in a while.

ROBIN: Tuck?

TUCK: We could practice shooting bows and arrows.

ROBIN: Jill Scarlet?

JILL: On a beautiful day like this, I could just walk in the woods all day.

(Enter Marian, disguised as a shepherdess.)

MARIAN: Excuse me. Are you Little Red Robin Hood?

ROBIN: Yes, I'm Robin.

MARIAN: Um—my name's—uh—Clorinda. I'm a shepherdess. May I join your band and live in the forest?

ROBIN: What about your sheep? Who will take care of them?

MARIAN: Oh. Uh—I don't have any sheep.

JILL SCARLET: I thought you said you were a shepherdess.

MARIAN: I am. I mean, I was. I've lost my sheep.

LITTLE JOAN: Are you sure your name isn't Bo Peep?

(The others laugh.)

MARIAN: A wolf ate them.

LITTLE JOAN: Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

MARIAN: So I haven't got any livelihood anymore and so I wondered if you'd let me join you.

(Just then Dale runs yelling across the stage, followed by the Wolf.)

DALE: Help!

(He is out. Jill Scarlet and Little Joan each grab the Wolf by an arm and hold her fast. Her legs continue to run.)

LITTLE JOAN: Aha!

JILL SCARLET: Gotcha!

TUCK: *(Drawing her sword:)* Is this the wolf that ate your sheep, Clorinda?

MARIAN: Um—I couldn't be absolutely sure.

TUCK: We'll soon put an end to her murderous ways.

(She raises her sword.)

MARIAN: No, don't. Stop. I'm sorry. I lied. I'm not a shepherdess, I never had any sheep. My name's Marian Fitzwalter and I ran away into the forest so I wouldn't have to marry Sir Guy. Don't hurt the wolf. She hasn't done anything to me.

TUCK: Then why did you pretend to be a shepherdess?

MARIAN: I was afraid you wouldn't have anything to do with me if you knew who I really am. Or that you'd tell my father.

WOLF: Would you mind letting go of me?

(Jill and Little Joan let go of her. She smooths her rumped fur. They help, until she snarls at them and they back off.)

MARIAN: I'm sorry.

WOLF: It's typical. Everyone always makes me out to be the bad guy.

ROBIN: Well, it did look like you were trying to eat that man you were chasing. Who was he?

WOLF: He's trying to cut down the forest. He's trying to take away your grandmother's cottage.

ROBIN: But she's paid the taxes on it now.

WOLF: That isn't going to help anymore.

(Enter Grandma.)

GRANDMA: There you are. Hello, Robin. Hello, Tuck. Little Joan, Jill Scarlet; how are you today? And I don't think I've met you.

MARIAN: My name's Clorinda.

GRANDMA: Nice to know you. Oh, you're here, too, Wolf. I hope you girls haven't been bothering my friend Wolf.

(Jill, Little Joan, and Tuck look supremely innocent.)

ROBIN: Wolf says something else has happened.

GRANDMA: Well, I don't quite understand about that. Oh, look. The Sheriff's coming back.

MARIAN: Oh, no! And Prince John and Sir Guy are with him. What will I do?

ROBIN: Tuck, take Marian to our hideout. The rest of you, hide and let's listen.

(Tuck, Marian, and the Wolf exit. Robin, Jill Scarlet, and Little Joan hide. One of them goes to hide behind the tree King Richard is hiding behind and he has to scamper to a different hiding place—maybe inside the hollow trunk. Enter Sheriff of Nottingham, Prince John, and Guy of Gisbourne.)

SHERIFF: Good afternoon, Madam.

GRANDMA: *(With a curtsey:)* Save your worships.

SHERIFF: You got the notice that your property's been condemned?

GRANDMA: Even though I've paid the taxes?

SHERIFF: Yes. It'll be torn down the day after tomorrow.

GRANDMA: What? Can you really do that?

SHERIFF: Yes.

GRANDMA: (*To Prince John:*) Can he do that?

PRINCE JOHN: Yes. I told him he could.

GRANDMA: And who are you, anyway?

PRINCE JOHN: I'm Prince John.

GRANDMA: Oh. I wish King Richard were back. *He'd* take care of us.

SHERIFF: Show more respect to His Highness or I'll have you arrested.

GRANDMA: I'm sure I didn't mean any disrespect. Don't you wish your brother were safely back, Your Highness?

PRINCE JOHN: Oh—uh—sure. Yeah. I lose sleep over it. But don't worry, I'm raising all the money I can—for the ransom.

GRANDMA: Please won't you stop him from tearing down my cottage?

PRINCE JOHN: No.

GRANDMA: Then can I at least have the tax money back?

SHERIFF: Of course not.

GRANDMA: But I won't have anywhere to live.

SHERIFF: In that case, you'll have to pay the vagrancy tax.

GRANDMA: I've never even heard of a vagrancy tax.

SHERIFF: No, I just made it up.

GRANDMA: What will I do?

SHERIFF: Why don't you run along before I fine you for loitering?

(She exits, shaking her head.)

PRINCE JOHN: You've already collected property taxes from this woman?

SHERIFF: Yes, Your Highness.

PRINCE JOHN: Then where are they?

SHERIFF: Um – you're holding them, Your Highness.

PRINCE JOHN: Oh, right.

(He hands the bag of coins to Guy.)

Here. Keep track of this for me, will you?

GUY: Yes, Your Highness.

(Prince John sweeps out, followed by the Sheriff. Guy hangs back a little. When the other two are gone, he opens the mouth of the bag and peers in. Robin, Jill Scarlet, and Little Joan surround him.)

ROBIN: *(In her little-girl voice:)* Excuse me.

(Guy looks up. Robin draws her sword and points it at him.)

I'll take that, if you don't mind.

GUY: Aaahh!

(He turns to run offstage, runs into Jill Scarlet, who puts out a hand for the money.)

JILL: Just hand it over –

(Guy runs upstage and runs into Little Joan.)

GUY: Ackk!

LITTLE JOAN: *(Reaching out a hand for the bag of coins:)* Nice

and easy.

(Guy sees he's outnumbered and hands over the bag of coins.)

GUY: I'm gonna get it for this.

(He exits following Prince John.)

ROBIN: Jill Scarlet, Little Joan, you go on back to the hideout. I'm going to give this money back to Grandma.

(Jill Scarlet and Little Joan exit in one direction; Robin in the other. King Richard comes downstage.)

KING RICHARD: I *really* don't like the idea of cutting down the forest, if it means the people who already live here are going to lose their homes. Is my brother really doing this to raise money to rescue me? Maybe I misjudged him. Or maybe...

(He exits the way Prince John left. Dale enters cautiously, looking left and right.)

DALE: Is that wolf gone?

(He creeps his way Center Stage, glancing about fearfully. The Wolf enters from the other side, sees Dale, and growls fiercely. Dale gives a shriek and runs away, circling several of the trees on the way out, with the Wolf close behind. Now Robin skips onstage, still holding the bag of coins. The Sheriff, disguised in a ragged cloak, enters and comes up to her.)

SHERIFF: *(In a high, creaky voice:)* Excuse me, young lady. I'm a poor, hungry traveler. I was on a pilgrimage, but I was robbed in the woods and I haven't had anything to eat for two days.

ROBIN: That's terrible. Who robbed you?

SHERIFF: Er – that Sheriff of Nottingham. He said there was a transportation tax and I couldn't go by the road unless I gave him all my money. So I said I'd cut through the forest, and he

said I'd be trespassing on the King's land and there was a fine. And then he took all my money.

ROBIN: Here. I was going to give this money to my grandma, because she's about to lose her cottage, but I think you need it more.

(She gives him the bag of coins. He throws off his disguise.)

SHERIFF: Ha! You're under arrest, Little Red Robin Hood!

ROBIN: Ooh, you nasty Sheriff!

(They pull out their swords and fight, then Robin escapes through the woods.)

SHERIFF: She got away again. But at least I got the money back.

(Enter the Bishop of Hereford.)

BISHOP: Ah. Sheriff. Happy St. Swythan's Day.

SHERIFF: St. Swythan's Day? Who was St. Swythan?

BISHOP: Patron saint of generosity. It's customary on his feast day to give a gift to the church.

(He plucks the bag of coins out of the Sheriff's hand and starts to leave.)

SHERIFF: Wait —

BISHOP: St. Swythan will bless you for your generosity.

(He exits.)

SHERIFF: *(Gloomy:)* I've never even heard of St. Swythan.

(He exits. Enter Prince John and Guy.)

GUY: It wasn't my fault. I was robbed by Little Red Robin Hood and her band of Merry Maidens.

PRINCE JOHN: Too bad. You still have to pay me back.

GUY: I don't have enough money.

PRINCE JOHN: Aren't you getting married soon? You can take it out of the dowry.

GUY: That's another thing. Marian's disappeared. Her father doesn't know where she is.

PRINCE JOHN: You've lost the money *and* your fiancée?

GUY: It's not my fault.

(Prince John leaves. Guy is left alone onstage.)

How is any of this my fault? Wait! I hear someone coming. I'd better hide.

(He crouches behind the hollow trunk. Enter Little Joan and Jill Scarlet. Both hold baskets.)

JILL: How many strawberries have you picked, Little Joan?

LITTLE JOAN: I've got almost a whole basketful.

JILL: We should head on back to the hideout. Do you think the new girl knows how to cook?

LITTLE JOAN: Marian? I don't know. She's a nobleman's daughter. They probably have servants and everything.

(At the mention of Marian's name, Guy pops his head up above the top of the trunk.)

JILL: She might still know how to cook.

LITTLE JOAN: I suppose.

JILL: And she wants us to call her Clorinda, not Marian. And pretend she's a shepherdess.

LITTLE JOAN: I wonder why she chose the name Clorinda.

JILL: Who knows? We'd better get back.

(They exit. Guy comes downstage.)

GUY: Now I know where she is. But if I follow them to their hideout, I'll be outnumbered. If Marian would only get to know me, I'm not such a bad person. I know! I'll disguise myself as a shepherd and join Robin's band. Then I'll have a chance to make friends with Marian.

(He exits. Dale enters, looking about nervously. He carries a rope.)

DALE: I'm going to set a trap for that wolf. Oh, don't worry, not a metal one or anything. That would be inhumane. But when we cut down the forest, we'll have to relocate the wildlife, anyway. I'm just getting a little head start on the job. Let's see. Maybe over here.

(He exits. Enter Sheriff and the Bishop of Hereford.)

SHERIFF: I don't know, Your Worship. I don't think there's any precedent. Tell me again why you think the church should get the revenue from the golf course?

BISHOP: We'll call it a retreat center. A place to get away from the worries and woes of everyday life.

(Dale reenters, nods to the other two in passing.)

DALE: Good day, gentlemen.

(They nod to Dale but continue their conversation as they cross the stage.)

SHERIFF: But isn't a retreat center usually owned by the church?

BISHOP: An excellent idea.

SHERIFF: What is?

BISHOP: To give the land for the golf course to the church.

SHERIFF: What!? But I didn't say—I mean—I wasn't offering—

(The Sheriff and the Bishop are off. The next moment, there is an offstage cry from the Bishop.)

BISHOP: *(Off:)* Aaaaaaah! Help!

(Dale looks back over his shoulder, flinches guiltily.)

DALE: Oops. *(He hastily sneaks out the other way.)*

BISHOP: *(Off:)* Help! Get me out of this!

SHERIFF: *(Off:)* Hold still, Your Worship. Almost got it. There you are. Good as new.

(They come back onstage. The Sheriff brushes off the Bishop's robe.)

Don't you worry. When I find out who set that unauthorized trap, I'll have them arrested.

BISHOP: Oh, goodness gracious.

SHERIFF: You'll be just fine, Your Worship. Why don't you go back to the abbey and have a nice cup of tea.

(He escorts the Bishop offstage, then returns.)

Ha! He dropped that bag of coins, and didn't notice. I'll just go collect it myself.

(He exits. Enter Robin, Marian, and the Merry Maidens.)

LITTLE JOAN: That was a dirty trick the Sheriff played on you, Robin.

TUCK: We need to think of a way to get him back.

MARIAN: I have an idea. Look, he's coming. Stand where he can't see you.

(The others hide. Enter Sheriff. Marian approaches him.)

Excuse me. Are you the Sheriff?

SHERIFF: Yes. And who are you?

MARIAN: My name's Clorinda, I'm a shepherdess. And I heard that you were looking for Little Red Robin Hood.

SHERIFF: Yes, I am. And if you have any information, it's your duty as a law-abiding citizen —

MARIAN: Is there a reward?

SHERIFF: All right. If you can show me where Little Red Robin Hood is, I'll —

MARIAN: *(Calling over her shoulder:)* Oh, Robin.

(Robin steps out.)

ROBIN: Yes?

MARIAN: Here's someone who wants to see you. *(She gestures to the Sheriff.)*

SHERIFF: Aha!

(Jill, Tuck, and Little Joan step out, too, swords drawn.)

LITTLE JOAN: Does he want to see us, too?

SHERIFF: Confound you!

(Marian takes the money away from him and gives it to Robin.)

MARIAN: Thanks for my reward.

(They skip off into the woods, laughing. The Sheriff is left alone onstage.)

SHERIFF: My money! I'll bet she's headed for her grandmother's cottage. If I can get there first...

(He exits. Wolf chases Dale across the stage.)

DALE: Help!

(And they are out. Enter Robin and Marian.)

ROBIN: That was great, Marian. Oops. Clorinda. It's a lot of fun having you hang out with us. I guess at first we were all a little afraid you might be kind of stuck up.

MARIAN: Thank you for giving me a chance. I'm glad you didn't make up your mind about me without knowing me, just because my father's an important person. Are you going to take the money to your grandmother?

ROBIN: Yes.

MARIAN: Do you want me to come with you? It might be safer.

ROBIN: No, that's okay. I'll see you back at the hideout.

MARIAN: Bye.

(They exit in two different directions. The scene again shifts to Grandma's cottage. Grandma paces, wringing her hands.)

GRANDMA: How am I going to save my home?

(The Sheriff enters.)

SHERIFF: Good afternoon, Ma'am.

GRANDMA: You haven't come to tear down my cottage yet, have you? You said I had until the day after tomorrow.

SHERIFF: No. I was only coming to inform you—that—er—that Prince John is holding a hearing regarding all the properties by the stream. Your best chance to save your home is to go to the hearing and petition Prince John. But you'd better hurry.

GRANDMA: I'll go right away.

SHERIFF: Er—Ma'am? You won't need that shawl. It's a lovely day. And the cap? You might want to leave that as well. You'll want to look your best to make a good impression.

(Grandma bustles off. The Sheriff quickly dons the cap and shawl and sits in the rocking chair. He whistles a little tune as he rocks back and forth. Enter Robin.)

ROBIN: Good news, Grandma. We got your tax money back. So now at least if you have to find a place to live in town, you'll be able to pay the rent.

SHERIFF: *(Holding out his hands for the money and using his best "old lady" voice:)* Oh, that's wonderful, dear.

ROBIN: Grandma? Your eyes look so big.

SHERIFF: Only because I'm surprised to see you, dear.

ROBIN: And—and your ears, too, Grandma. They look really big.

SHERIFF: Because I'm hanging on your every word.

ROBIN: And—and is that a sword you have there, Grandma? What's that for?

SHERIFF: *(Jumping up and removing the cap, and letting the shawl fall to the floor:)* To arrest you with, my dear!

(Robin gives a cry of alarm and draws her sword. She and the Sheriff sword fight for a bit and then Robin runs away.)

She got away again! But at least I've got the money back.

(He exits. The scene shifts back to the forest. Prince John enters, crosses. Grandma enters and catches up to him.)

GRANDMA: Your Highness! Your Highness!

PRINCE JOHN: *(Turning:)* Yes? What do you want?

GRANDMA: I'm here for the hearing.

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PRINCE JOHN: What hearing? There's nothing the matter with my hearing.

GRANDMA: The Sheriff said I could talk to you about my cottage.

PRINCE JOHN: I recognize you now. You have one of the cottages by the stream.

GRANDMA: Yes, and I've come to ask you to change your mind about having them torn down.

PRINCE JOHN: I never change my mind. Go away.

GRANDMA: But —

PRINCE JOHN: And stop bothering me.

(He exits.)

GRANDMA: That was a hearing? Maybe there's something the matter with *my* hearing.

(She goes out the other way, shaking her head. Guy enters, disguised as a shepherd.)

GUY: This is the place they were picking strawberries before. Maybe they'll come back.

(Enter Tuck, Jill, Little Joan, and Marian.)

Excuse me. I'm a shepherd. My name's — um — Walter. Are you friends of Little Red Robin Hood?

LITTLE JOAN: Yes.

GUY: And is one of you named Clorinda?

MARIAN: I'm Clorinda.

TUCK: You're a shepherd? Where are your sheep?

GUY: Um — back there.

(He gestures vaguely behind him.)

JILL SCARLET: What do you want?

GUY: I wondered if maybe I could join you.

(The girls all burst out laughing.)

What's so funny?

LITTLE JOAN: We don't let boys join our band of Merry Maidens.

GUY: You don't?

MARIAN: We're Merry *Maidens*, after all.

GUY: Couldn't you make an exception?

TUCK: Not for a boy.

GUY: But—but that's discrimination. And besides—I could be helpful, maybe.

LITTLE JOAN: We can take care of ourselves without you.

GUY: Please?

JILL: You'd better get back to your sheep before something happens to them.

(They skip off, leaving Guy alone onstage.)

GUY: Now what? I only want to make friends with Marian.

(He exits, dejected. Enter Dale.)

DALE: If that wolf tries to eat me again, I'm ready for her.

(The Wolf enters, gives a growl. Dale whirls and draws a sword.)

Aha!

WOLF: Yipes!

(This time Dale chases the Wolf around the trees and off. A beat. The Wolf runs back on and jumps inside the hollow trunk. Dale enters.)

DALE: Where did she go? She got away. Oh, well. She won't be so quick to try to eat me anymore.

(He exits. King Richard enters.)

KING RICHARD: I saw my brother and the Sheriff. I think they're coming this way. Maybe now I can figure out what's really going on here.

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