

MERRY MEN OF SHERWOOD

To read more of this pantomime script order a reading copy from
Antz@antzpantz.co.uk

ACT ONE SCENE ONE

A Clearing in The Forest of Sherwood

The forest, where Robin Hood is discovered making Merry with his Men, a motley-looking crew, is represented by a single tree, centre stage. There is a campfire, a couple of tree stumps, and a log, or grassy bank. Alan-a-Dale is strumming his lute, while Colin is supervising the toasting of marshmallows around the campfire. Will Scarlett and Mutch the Miller's Son are playing Snap and Robin himself, who as leader has bagged one of the tree stumps, is busy with his crocheting. They are all obviously having a great time and singing.

SONG: Gin Gan Goolie.

(Afterwards Will and Mutch resume their game of Snap, Alan strolls a little apart, twiddling with his instrument. Tuck settles back and dozes off.)

Robin: This is the life, eh, lads?

Little John: It certainly is Robin. *(There is lots of agreement)*

Will: You're dead right there.

Mutch: You're not wrong there.

Curly: Hear hear.

Hickory and Dickory: Great! Super!

O'Hara: Sure, 'tis a fine life you're leading us Robin, begorrah!

Colin: I haven't had such larks since I used to go camping with the Brownies. *(There is a loud twang and a yelp from Alan as a string breaks.)*

Alan-a-Dale: Well I hate it. *(consternation from the others)*

Little John: Oh come on Alan – look what fun we have

Curly: Sleeping out under the stars ..

Alan-a-Dale: ... with earwigs in your bedding!

Harvey: And a mossy stone for a pillow ...

Alan-a-Dale: damp moss.

Colin: Toasting marshmallows round the campfire with your trusty comrades. *(He passes one to Alan among a chorus of Mmms and ahhs and yummys)*

Alan-a-Dale *(viewing it distrustfully):* But I always get the burnt one. *(Aside)* And who'd trust this lot?

Ronnie: The forest leaves rustling in the breeze –

Colin: - and the sounds of all the little night creatures ...

Alan-a-Dale: ... knowing they're all around you, sneaking too close for comfort, and watching your every move with their little beady eyes - hundreds and hundreds of little beady eyes watching you in the dark *(The Merry Men begin to look apprehensive and draw together)* ... watching you and creeping closer and closer – *(an owl hoots and all but Tuck who slumbers on, jump in terror.)*

Merry Men: AAARRRGGGHHH! *(Robin fights free of the panicking mass)*

Robin: Oh, give me strength! Look, just stop being such a load of wussies. What are you, men or mice? (*Merry Men look at one another.*)

Merry Men: Mice!

Robin (*smoothing his tunic and returning to his tree stump*): Well, you won't catch me being frightened by an old hoot owl. (*He crochets furiously. A couple of the men return shame-faced, to the fire with Colin and pick up their marshmallow sticks, Will and Mutch, looking warily around, go back to their cards, but the others remain in a huddle, conferring and looking over towards Robin. Eventually they push Little John forward.*)

Curly: Go on – you tell him. (*John sidles up to Robin.*)

Little John: Ahem. (*Robin looks round with a start*). He's got a point, Robin. (*Robin folds his arms and looks down at him. Little John gulps.*) You see, it's not very comfortable, sleeping on the forest floor.

Robin: Not very –!

Ronnie: Well, it's not.

Harvey: The pine cones don't half stick in your back.

O'Hara: 'Tis a sight better than the peat bogs of Ireland to be sure.

Little John (*turning on him*): Whose side are you on?

Robin: Thank you O'Hara! You see – it's better than the peat bogs –

Merry Men: But Robin!

Harvey: You promised us we'd all be sleeping in silk sheets by Christmas.

Merry Men: Yeah!

Little John: Banqueting with the best of them in Nottingham Castle -

Curly: Eating off the finest earthenware -

Ronnie: Drinking from goblets of gold -

Arnold: The table set with the best quality damask table linen -

Colin (*aside*): Properly starched -

Timmy: And the shiniest silver cutlery -

Percy: Where's all this robbin' from the rich got to then?

Robin (*aside to Alan*): Now look what you've started. (*He turns back to the others*) Lads, lads! The deal was we rob from the rich to give to the poor, remember?

Will: Well, they don't come much poorer than us.

Mutch: And besides - we haven't done any robbin' at all yet – Robin! (*chorus of agreement*)

Robin: But -

Curly: And as for all your talk of ridding Nottingham of the evil Sheriff- well! (*they all fall about laughing.*)

Robin: Lads! I'm working on it. One thing at a time. Rome wasn't built in a day you know. (*there are a few puzzled looks*)

Will (*to Mutch*): What's Rome got to do with it?

Mutch: Search me!

Robin: And as for the Sheriff –

Merry Men: Yes?

Robin: I have a cunning plan - (*they surge forward eagerly but he holds up a hand*) – which I'll tell you about all in good time. (*crosses his fingers*) Of course we shall oust the evil Sheriff – one day – and when our noble King Richard the Lionheart – (*all stand reverently to attention, hands on hearts*)

All: King Richard the Lionheart!

Robin (*after a moment of respect*): - and when King Richard the Lionheart -

All: King Richard the Lionheart!

Robin: - and when King Rich – when HE returns from the Crusades he will find his beloved city of Nottingham free from tyranny and taxes!

All: Hooray!

Robin: So – this is the life eh, lads?

Little John: It certainly is, Robin! (*Murmurs of agreement as they all settle down again. Robin wipes his brow.*)

Robin: Phew! Crisis averted. (*To Alan*) I'll deal with you later. Why do you have to be such a moaning minstrel? (*Alan shrugs*) You are all supposed to be my **Merry Men**, remember. Whoever heard of Robin Hood and his Moaning Men?

Alan (*hanging his head*): I guess I'm just not cut out for merriment.

Mutch: Whoever heard of Robin Hood and his Merry Men for that matter?

Robin: That's very true, Mutch. But Alan-a-Dale here is going to put that right. He's been writing a new ballad – all about me and my exploits. How's it going, Alan?

Alan (*perking up*): Oh, it's coming together very nicely, Robin. Would you like to hear it?

Robin: Ooh, goody! Gather round you lot, Alan's going to entertain us with his new ballad. (*As the Men draw closer, with murmurs of interest, Alan makes a play of tuning his lute and clearing his throat.*) It's going to be a great hit you know. People will be singing it for generations to come and remembering the name of Robin Hood.

Harvey: What a good idea.

Will: What a big head!

Ronnie: Are we in it too?

Robin: Well of course! Though obviously the bulk of the verses will be about me - I mean to say, someone with such an important role in world affairs as me - well my deeds need to go down in the history books -

Little John (*nudging him*): I think he's ready.

Robin: Ooh, settle down everyone. (*When he has their attention Alan strikes a series of dramatic chords with a great flourish, then launches into his song.*)

SONG: Oo-de-lally (Mark 1)

Alan: Robin Hood and Little John sittin' round the campfire,
And chattin' 'bout the weather just to pass the time of day.

(*He stops, and sweeps a bow. The others look at one another*)

Robin: Is that it?

Alan: Well, you haven't actually done much yet, have you? (*Muttering breaks out again among the Merry Men.*)

Robin (*hurriedly*): Now, don't start that again! No doubt you'll be adding extra verses later Alan, eh?

Alan (*looking doubtful*): Sure, Robin.

Curly: How about a chorus so we can all join in?

Harvey: Yeah, let's have a chorus Alan!

Colin: Ooh, yes, I do love a good sing-song.

Alan: All in good time – you can't rush these things! A minstrel has to wait for the muse to strike (*there is a tinging noise.*) Ouch! I think it's struck! (*He strums a couple more chords*)

We're Merry Men of Sherwood and havin' such a good time,
Oo-de-lally, hoo-de-lally, golly what a day!

Robin (*walking away in disgust and getting on with his crocheting*) Oh doo lally golly what a -! (*The others cluster round Alan, congratulating him*)

Alan: Right, can we all manage that do you think?

Will and Mutch: Yes, Alan!

Little John: 'Course we can!

Colin: You bet!

O'Hara: Begorrah! 'Tis a fine chorus you have there, to be sure!

Hickory and Dickory: It's great! It's super!

Alan: Well, all together then, one, two, three!

All: We're Merry Men of Sherwood and havin' such a good time,
Oo-de-lally, hoo-de-lally, golly what a day!

Alan (*to audience*): That's right – join in when you think you know it! (*They sing the chorus through a couple of times; a spot of dancing breaks out and they finish with a flourish. As everyone gets back to what they were doing, Colin stands and looks across at Robin, sitting apart.*)

Colin (*aside*): I can't bear to see a grown man sulk! (*He crosses to him*) Here – have a marshmallow Robin.

Robin: Oooh, scrummy. I just adore toasted marshmallows. All crisp and black on the outside and pink and gooey on the inside. (*He pops it in his mouth.*) Well, it'll put me on 'til supper. (*Tuck wakes at last with a start*)

Tuck: Did someone mention supper? I'm starving.

Curly: You always are, Tuck!

Harvey: Tell us something we don't know!

Tuck: Well, I'm a growing lad! I don't get half enough to eat these days, since you persuaded me to join your outlaw band, Robin. Told me we'd be living off the fat of the land, you did, but it's all come to nothing.

Robin (*aside*): Oh, no, here we go again!

Tuck: And another thing – when you lured me away from the comfort of the monastery you promised me I'd be marrying people under the Greenwood Tree left, right and centre. Well, I do love a good wedding – especially the feasting afterwards – but have we had even a sniff of one? Have we heck as like! I need you to look after the spiritual welfare of the men you said. But how you expect me to do that when I'm not getting three decent meals a day, is beyond me! Just look at me – a shadow of my former self! Used to have a 54 inch waist, would you believe!

Robin (*who has been trying to interrupt the flow*): You look robust enough to me, Tuck! (*Colin rounds up the last of the marshmallows and hands them to Tuck*)

Colin: Here, Tuck – tuck into these. Your need is obviously greater than ours.

Tuck: Bless you, Colin – you're a good boy! These will help stave off the hunger pangs until I get my next proper meal. What time did you say supper was, Robin?

Robin: I didn't. But you know we have to wait until Willie gets back. (*Tuck looks around*)

Tuck: Why, where's he gone?

Robin: He's nipped into Nottingham to get the shopping. So there'll be no supper 'til he comes home!

Tuck: Oh, dear, oh dear! Do you think he'll be much longer, Robin?

Will: Yes, I'm getting a bit peckish too, Tuck.

Hickory and Dickory: Me too!

Mutch: I hope he's got something nice.

Harvey: I say, he's awfully late isn't he?

Little John: P'raps he's got lost!

Alan: Probably been mugged!

Colin: Or he might have met a girl. *(Someone wolf whistles)*

O'Hara: 'Tis a long road through the Forest, and a lonely one, to be sure -

Tuck: Seriously Robin, I'm getting a bit worried -

Will: Do you think we ought to send a search party?

Robin: Send a -! I've never heard anything like it. Just listen to the lot of you! Been mugged, indeed! Look, he only left half an hour ago!

Colin: Yeah, but if he's met a girl -

Robin: As if! And as for getting lost in the Forest - why, Willie knows that road like the back of his - wait a minute! I've just had an idea!

Ronnie: What sort of idea, Robin?

Robin: An idea for a wizard wheeze! Shall we play a prank on Willie?

All: Yes!

Robin: Suppose we move camp while he's away!

Little John: You mean -?

Robin: That's right - when Willie gets back here, there we are, gone! And he won't have a clue where to find us. So much for knowing the road like the back of his hand! Been getting too cocky by half has our Willie - this'll take him down a peg or two.

(There is general merriment and laughter as they prepare to leave)

Mutch: Robin, that's brilliant!

Hickory and Dickory: Great! Super!

Colin: Oh, Robin you are a tease!

Tuck: But Robin - what about our supper! My belly thinks my throat's been cut!

Robin: Oh, never mind your belly Tuck! I say, what a lark this is going to be lads! Come on then - follow me! *(They exit, singing a chorus of Oo-de-lally as they go.)*

**To read more of this pantomime script order a reading copy from
Antz@antzpantz.co.uk**