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# **The Many Disguises of Robin Hood**

By

**BRIAN GUEHRING**



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(THE MANY DISGUISES OF ROBIN HOOD)

ISBN: 978-1-61959-103-5

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*The Many Disguises of Robin Hood* was first produced as a 60-minute play with music at the Papillion LaVista Arts Network Summer Camp in the summer of 2002 with a cast of 63 students from kindergarten through 9th grade with the following production team:

Director ..... Brian Guehring  
Producer/Tech Director ..... Debbie Kippley  
Music Director ..... Jackie Fowler  
Choreographer..... Donna Marceaux

# The Many Disguises of Robin Hood

## CHARACTERS

**ROBIN HOOD:** an outlaw, amazing archer and heroine.

**MAID MARIAN:** a princess in the court.

**LITTLE JOHN:** Robin's best friend.

**JILL SCARLET:** a strong archer.

**FRIAR TUCK:** a kind, goodhearted friar.

**ALANA DALE:** a minstrel.

**(ELIZABETH) BOLD BETH:** the widow's daughter.

**MUCH:** the king's cook.

**QUEEN ELEANOR:** the good queen of England (but blind to her son's shortcomings).

**SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM:** an unscrupulous power-abusing villain.

**LUCIANA:** his greedy, selfish, evil daughter.

**PRINCE JOHN:** an unscrupulous, power-abusing villain.

**KING RICHARD:** the brave king, off fighting the Crusades.

**LADY DIGGORY:** a shallow lady-in-waiting in the court.

**WIDOW:** Elizabeth's mother and poor resident of Nottingham.

**FORESTERS 1-4:** law enforcers.

**LEAD PUPPETEER:** leader of the puppeteer troupe.

**PUPPETEER NARRATOR:** storyteller.

**YOUNG LADY PUPPET:** the heroine of the puppet show.

**JESTER PUPPET:** a silly puppet.

**PRINCE PUPPET:** a ridiculous leader.

**SHERIFF PUPPET:** another ridiculous leader.

**CHORUS:** townspeople, archery contestants, archery judge, merry men/outlaws, court dancers, etc.

SETTINGS: Sherwood forest, the sheriff of Nottingham's castle and the town of Nottingham.

TIME: 800 years ago.

## DOUBLING SUGGESTIONS

For a cast of 8 (2m., 6w.):

Actress 1: Robin Hood/Lead Puppeteer/Puppeteer Narrator

Actress 2: Maid Marian/Page/Friar Tuck

Actress 3: Jill Scarlet/Forester/Black Knight

Actress 4: Luciana/Alana Dale/Young Lady Puppeteer

Actress 5: Queen Eleanor/Much/Widow

Actress 6: Bold Beth/Lady Diggory/Archery Judge

Actor 1: Sheriff of Nottingham/King Richard

Actor 2: Little John/Prince John/Jester Puppeteer/Prince Puppeteer/Sheriff Puppeteer

## CASTING NOTES

For smaller casts, the forester lines can be combined into one or two foresters, and Robin Hood plays the lead puppeteer and puppeteer narrator.

To expand the cast for large youth ensembles split the forester lines among a larger number than the four listed here; split ELIZABETH's part into two (DOROTHY/DARING DOT) to give the WIDOW two daughters, who both join Robin Hood; and split LADY DIGGORY's lines into two or three parts and add other shallow ladies-in-waiting. This can expand the number of speaking parts to more than 30.

# The Many Disguises of Robin Hood

## Scene 1: Good Will in Nottingham

*(The SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM and his ROYAL FORESTERS are strolling along the street.)*

SHERIFF. Ah, what a beautiful morning.

FORESTER #1. The sun is out,

FORESTER #2. The birds are singing,

SHERIFF. And you can just sense the good will in my little town of Nottingham.

FORESTER #1. Sheriff, is it true what they say? I heard there was a vicious outlaw living in Sherwood Forest.

SHERIFF. Just because one man was robbed in the forest and tells stories is no reason to be scared.

FORESTER #2. I heard he is the best archer in the land.

FORESTER #3. Rumor has it he can shoot an arrow into a sapling tree three hundred yards away.

*(FRIAR TUCK enters with a cart filled with clothes and food.)*

SHERIFF. Nobody could shoot an arrow that well. Ah, Friar Tuck. Good morning.

FRIAR TUCK. Sheriff. What are you doing?

SHERIFF. Collecting taxes.

FRIAR TUCK. You were here last week.

SHERIFF. Prince John has raised the tariffs again, I'm afraid. You look tired.



FRIAR TUCK. The orphanage burned down last night. I've been up all night collecting food and clothing for the poor children.

SHERIFF. Did you collect any money?

FRIAR TUCK. Oh, no, Sheriff. Prince John has raised the taxes so much, nobody has any money left to donate.

SHERIFF. Then if you didn't collect any money, then you won't need this.

*(SHERIFF takes out some money buried in the clothes and food.)*

FRIAR TUCK. That money belongs to the orphanage!

SHERIFF. Even orphanages need to pay taxes.

FRIAR TUCK. You will be punished for your evil deeds, Sheriff.

*(SHERIFF and FORESTERS continue past FRIAR TUCK.)*

FORESTER #4. I heard he has over two hundred men living with him now.

FORESTER #1. It's a huge army of angry, evil men who aren't afraid of anything.

SHERIFF. Outlaws trust nobody and work by themselves. There is no organized army of outlaws in Sherwood Forest.

FORESTER #2. I heard that he is a master of disguise.

FORESTER #3. I heard that once he dressed as a woman and tricked a lord out of four bags of gold.

SHERIFF. ENOUGH! These are silly rumors started by the poor people so they don't give up hope. There is no truth to them at all. Think about it. How could a man dress up as a woman convincingly enough to trick a man one foot away? It couldn't happen.

*(SHERIFF knocks on the door of WIDOW's house. ELIZABETH opens.)*

SHERIFF. Tax collectors.

ELIZABETH. We have no money.

SHERIFF. Then your father should work harder.

ELIZABETH. My father is dead.

SHERIFF. What a shame. You still have to pay taxes.

FORESTER #1. Where is your mother, young girl?

ELIZABETH. Leave us alone!

WIDOW *(entering)*. What's going on?

SHERIFF. You need to teach your daughter some manners, and you need to pay your taxes.

ELIZABETH. She's been sick. She couldn't work.

SHERIFF. Fine, then you are arrested for failure to pay taxes.

ELIZABETH. How can she pay her taxes if she is in jail? She still won't be able to work.

SHERIFF. Then you'd better find a way to earn some money, young girl, or you'll be joining her.

WIDOW. Take care of yourself, Elizabeth. Friar Tuck will help you.

*(FORESTERS grasp WIDOW and begin to take her away.)*

FORESTER #4. Well that was the last house. We have to take this through Sherwood Forest, then?

SHERIFF. No, we're not going through Sherwood Forest.

FORESTER #1. How will we give this money to Prince John?

SHERIFF. Last week's tax was ordered by Prince John. This week's tax is for me, and no outlaw would have the audacity to attack inside this town.

PUPPETEERS (*offstage*). Puppet Show! Puppet Show!

LEAD PUPPETEER (*offstage*). Come watch the amazing  
Puppeteers of Devonshire!

ELIZABETH. A puppet show?

FORESTER #2. Let's watch. Surely, there is an entertainment  
tax for them to pay.

*(PUPPETEERS enter.)*

LEAD PUPPETEER. Come one, come all, and see the most  
amazing puppet show you've ever seen. It'll astound you!  
It'll entertain you! It will fill your heart with joy, and I  
promise you, you will leave this performance with a much  
lighter step.

*(A crowd gathers to watch as puppeteers act out the story.)*

PUPPETEER NARRATOR. Once upon a time, there was a  
silly jester who loved a beautiful lady-in-waiting.

JESTER PUPPET. I love you.

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. And I love how you make me laugh.

*(PUPPETS kiss.)*

JESTER PUPPET. Will you marry me?

*(YOUNG LADY puppet laughs.)*

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. Stop joking.

JESTER PUPPET. I'm serious.

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. You are the silliest person I know. I  
can't marry one of the biggest sillies in the world.

JESTER PUPPET. Believe me, the whole kingdom is silly.

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. Fine. If I find three bigger sillies than you, then I will marry you.

PUPPETEER NARRATOR. Soon the young lady came across a prince.

*(LEAD PUPPETEER gives keys to FRIAR TUCK.)*

ELIZABETH. That looks like Prince John!

WIDOW. Shhh!

PRINCE PUPPET. Woe is me! I can't move my hands!

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. Why not?

PRINCE PUPPET. They weigh too much.

*(Two puppet hands weighed down by lots of rings are seen.)*

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. Why don't you take off some of your rings?

PRINCE PUPPET. What! Nobody will believe I'm the king unless I have lots and lots of rings.

*(PRINCE PUPPET drags himself off.)*

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. Well, now I have met one bigger silly than my love.

PUPPETEER NARRATOR. Luckily for her, she next met the sheriff.

SHERIFF PUPPET. Woe is me!

ELIZABETH. That looks like the sheriff of Nottingham.

*(SHERIFF stands up, angry. LEAD PUPPETEER steals his money.)*

PUPPETEER NARRATOR. Sorry, child. That's just a coincidence. It's based on a sheriff in Devonshire.

*(SHERIFF sits.)*

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. What's wrong?

SHERIFF PUPPET. Nobody can pay the taxes.

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. Aren't they earning any money?

SHERIFF PUPPET. No, they're in jail.

*(FRIAR TUCK now unlocks the ball and chain attached to WIDOW. FRIAR TUCK helps her quietly hide.)*

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. Why don't you let them out so they can earn money and pay taxes?

SHERIFF PUPPET. I can't let them out of jail. They owe money for taxes.

YOUNG LADY PUPPET. Well that is a second man sillier than my love.

SHERIFF. Enough! Enough!

PUPPETEER NARRATOR. The show isn't over yet. The young lady next meets the sheriff's daughter who is the silliest of them all.

SHERIFF. Puppet shows are outlawed in Nottingham.

PUPPETEER NARRATOR. Oh, sorry. We did not know. We will just pack up our things and move along, then.

SHERIFF. Not yet. You owe a performance tax, puppeteers.

LEAD PUPPETEER. Yes, and if we performed in Nottingham we would happily pay it.

FORESTER #1. But you just performed ...

LEAD PUPPETEER. Are you implying that your sheriff is so ignorant that he would allow a traveling troupe of puppeteers to break the law and perform in Nottingham?

PUPPETEER NARRATOR. Are you saying your sheriff is incompetent?

FORESTER #1. No, I'm not saying that. Our sheriff does his job well!

LEAD PUPPETEER. Obviously with such a smart and observant sheriff here, you would never let a traveling troupe of puppeteers perform here. So obviously we don't owe any money.

SHERIFF. Exactly. Let's move along then.

*(SHERIFF and FORESTERS exit. PUPPETEERS take off disguises, showing their forest green costumes as ROBIN HOOD and other OUTLAWS, including LITTLE JOHN and ALANA DALE. They start giving money to the poor.)*

ELIZABETH. Robin Hood!

ROBIN HOOD. That's right, young lady. This gold should help your widowed mother get some food and medicine.

*(ROBIN HOOD hands a bag of gold coins to ELIZABETH.)*

ELIZABETH. Robin, what are you going to do with the rest of the money you stole from the sheriff?

FRIAR TUCK. Steal? They don't "steal."

LITTLE JOHN. We just return money to their rightful owners.

ROBIN HOOD. The extra money in these bags will go to the orphanage. They deserve this money. Don't you think? Little John, I'll meet you in Sherwood Forest.

*(ROBIN HOOD and OUTLAWS begin to exit.)*

LITTLE JOHN. Let's go.

ELIZABETH. Let me go with you.

LITTLE JOHN. Why?

ELIZABETH. I hate the sheriff of Nottingham and what he's doing to this town. I'll do anything to fight back against him.

LITTLE JOHN. Then enter our company. The rites are few,  
but the fee is large.

ALANA DALE. We ask your whole mind and body and heart  
even unto death.

SHERIFF (*offstage*). Where are the taxes?

ELIZABETH. I give my bond.

ALANA DALE. OK. We'd better hurry, though.

ELIZABETH. Are you sure Robin Hood won't mind a girl  
joining his group?

LITTLE JOHN. Believe me, you don't have to worry about  
that. Now let's hurry.

*(ELIZABETH gives money to her mother, then runs with  
LITTLE JOHN and ALANA DALE to safety just as SHERIFF  
and the FORESTERS return.)*

SHERIFF. Where are those puppeteers? (*Townpeople all point  
in different directions.*) ARRRRRGGGGGHHHHH!!!!

## Scene 2: A Greedy Daughter

*(SHERIFF returns to his castle distraught and angry at  
ROBIN HOOD.)*

LUCIANA. Daddy, you're back.

SHERIFF. Yes, my dear.

LUCIANA. Where is my ruby encrusted golden arm band?

SHERIFF. I don't have it.

LUCIANA. What do you mean you don't have it? That's what  
you were doing. You were collecting taxes and money so you  
could get me the ruby encrusted golden arm band that I want!

SHERIFF. I don't have it.

LUCIANA. Why not? Did you go tender-hearted and leave the poor townspeople some money to buy food?

SHERIFF. No.

LUCIANA. Are they out of money?

SHERIFF. No. We lost the money. We were watching a puppet show, and the money we collected disappeared.

*(LUCIANA laughs.)*

LUCIANA. My father, the sheriff, is so useless he can't keep *himself* from getting robbed. By some silly hood. A robbing hood.

SHERIFF. He won't get away with it.

LUCIANA. I told you, you should have dealt with him earlier. Now he's giving the people hope. He's probably gaining more recruits as we speak.

SHERIFF. Fine, we will send out my best men and we will capture him. Nobody embarrasses the sheriff of Nottingham!

### Scene 3: Welcome to the Band

*(The OUTLAWS are all enjoying life in Sherwood Forest, They are practicing archery, wrestling, eating good food. FRIAR TUCK greets his hunting dogs. ELIZABETH looks amazed. All OUTLAWS cheer when ROBIN HOOD enters.)*

ROBIN HOOD. Ah, my band of merry outlaws. We have a new member of our troupe.

*(They cheer, "HUZZAHH!")*



ROBIN HOOD (*cont'd*). A youngster brave enough to stand up to the sheriff of Nottingham. May I present, Bold Beth.

*(OUTLAWS cheer.)*

ROBIN HOOD (*cont'd*). Now let the feast begin.

*(OUTLAWS begin the feast as ROBIN HOOD introduces BOLD BETH to members of the troupe.)*

ROBIN HOOD. Bold Beth, this is Friar Tuck.

FRIAR TUCK. We always welcome a new member in our fold.

ROBIN HOOD. Friar Tuck is our storyteller and spiritual leader.

FRIAR TUCK. I make sure they give the money back to the people who need it the most.

ROBIN HOOD. Friar Tuck is also our official banquet taster.

FRIAR TUCK. That is the hardest thing about moving to Sherwood Forest. Giving up great food.

*(FRIAR TUCK returns to the banquet. ROBIN approaches JILL SCARLET and LITTLE JOHN, who are giving lessons to other MERRY MEN.)*

ROBIN HOOD. This is Jill Scarlet, the best archer in England.

JILL SCARLET. After Robin Hood.

ROBIN HOOD. And Little John, the best quarterstaff fighter you have ever met.

LITTLE JOHN. I gave Robin a knock on the noggin. Anyone able to get a knock on Robin is invited to join his band.

ROBIN HOOD. If you can't beat them, ask them to join you.

JILL SCARLET. You also have to be honorable to be invited.

BOLD BETH. Pleased to meet you.