

ROBIN HOOD: ***The Next Generation***

By Shirley McNichols

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Things are definitely changing in Sherwood Forest! Sir Robin Hood and Lady Marian have been married for 20 years and their beautiful daughter, Robin, is about to come of age. The Queen has selected the young woman to succeed her to the throne but insists she first must be wed to a man of royal lineage. Being a woman of the next generation, Robin naturally resents being married off so quickly without some romance. So she devises a clever contest in which the best archer and swordsman shall win her hand. Robin convinces her maid to stand in for her while she herself dresses as a man to compete and win the contest to prove her point. And after living her whole life in the forest, winning won't be hard to do!

Meanwhile, the young male contenders have plans of their own. Prince Jared resents being forced into the competition since he, too, wants to marry for love and so convinces his manservant to switch places with him. Other contenders include comic princes Harold and Gerald, poor Prince Rodney the Regrettable, and wimpy Lord Horvath, whose mother has evil plans for usurping the throne.

Luckily good wins over evil and true love wins out in this smart, original comedy that proves the next generation can be as easily entertaining as the first.

SYNOPSIS

Act I

Scene 1: Sherwood Forest.

Scene 2: Next afternoon in Sorceress' lab.

Scene 3: A day later, the forest near Prince Jared's castle.

Scene 4: Meanwhile in Sherwood Forest.

Act II

Scene 1: Several days later, Nottingham Castle courtyard.

Scene 2: Minutes later, another side of the courtyard.

Scene 3: Afternoon before the banquet, castle courtyard.

Scene 4: Night of the banquet, in the great hall of the castle.

Scene 5: Next morning, Sherwood Forest.

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CAST

(10 m, 13 w, 3 flexible)

ROBIN: Daughter of Sir Robin and Lady Marian.
MADOLYN: Robin's lady in waiting.
LITTLE LITTLE JOHN: Robin's forest companion.
PRIAR TICK: Robin's forest companion.
LADY MARIAN: Robin's mother.
QUEEN: The Queen.
KNAVE 1: A knave.*
KNAVE 2: Another knave.*
KATHERINE: Queen's lady-in-waiting.
ELSBETH: Another.
ROSAMONDE: Another.
LADY VENDOLA: Evil usurper of the throne.
CAPERS: Vendola's sorceress.*
LORD HORVATH: Vendola's evil son.
SIR ROBIN: Robin Hood, of course.
PRINCE JARED: A champion.
AMBROSE: Prince Jared's servant.
PRINCE HAROLD: A comic prince.
PRINCE GERALD: Harold's funny brother.
PRINCE RODNEY the REGRETTABLE: Bad luck prince.
ANNE (NARRATOR 1): Jared's mother, a queen.
ALBERT (NARRATOR 2): Jared's father, a king.
IRMA: Wants to marry Jared.
OBNOXIA: Irma's servant.
GILDA: Robin's cousin.
GLENDA: Robin's cousin.
** Indicates flexible part*

COSTUMES

In general, costumes should try to capture a medieval flavor. Satin or other nice fabrics and bright colors should be used for noblemen and royalty. Servants should wear cotton-type fabrics in neutral colors. Check the library or costume shops for style details. Specifically: Horvath is foppish with a highly ruffled shirt, satin pants, and curled wig. Robin wears pants, peasant-style shirt, vest, and cap in greens and browns. She and Jared both have scarf masks. In addition, Jared has a royal sash which Ambrose then wears. Madolyn wears a veil and rich-looking dress when posing as Robin.

SET DESIGNS

Two backgrounds are needed. The first, a forest set, stays in place throughout the play. Flats, or painted and secured cardboard panels, line the UPS area. A forest scene with perhaps a castle sitting off in the distance is painted on them. A portable tree (this can be painted on a flat surface as well) is SR. Various movable plants can be placed here and there to add to the woodsy effect.

The second set, a gray "stone" wall representing a castle interior and exterior, is moved on and off several times. It is recommended it be made from cardboard panels for ease of movement. The panels should be about six feet tall and be connected to form a partition ten to fifteen feet in length. It will have to be set up in a zigzag pattern to keep it from falling, and it should cover most of the forest scene.

Other set pieces needed include a wooden two-person bench and a small table. In addition, for the banquet scene two long, small narrow tables and numerous campstools are needed. Lightweight, folding camp stools are more desirable because they can be carried on and off by the actors who will be sitting on them. Chairs can be used but take up a lot of room and are difficult to move off and on swiftly.

SOUND EFFECTS

Medieval music to open acts and for dancing, loud explosion.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: ANNE and ALBERT enter right and move DSR where a spot comes up on them.)

ANNE: Hello, and welcome everyone.

ALBERT: I am Albert and this is my charming wife, Anne.

ANNE: A pleasure.

ALBERT: No doubt you've all heard of the infamous Robin Hood.

ANNE: You know the legend that he stole from the rich and gave to the poor?

ALBERT: That his ragtag lot of commoners with their inferior skills and weapons managed to hold off the unscrupulous Prince John's well-trained and well-armed soldiers long enough for the rightful king to return to his throne.

ANNE: But there are many uncertainties about the legend as well.

ALBERT: Like when the story took place.

ANNE: Some say it was during the Crusades.

ALBERT: Others argue Robin Hood defended the throne while the King fought the Normans.

ANNE: Some say it was the throne of King Richard the Lionhearted he defended.

ALBERT: Others say King Arthur.

ANNE: And there is a question about Robin Hood himself.

ALBERT: Was he man or myth?

ANNE: And if man, was he one man, or the composite of many?

ALBERT: And how important is it, really, whether Robin Hood existed at all?

ANNE: It is rather the ideals he embodied that are the important thing.

ALBERT: But our story is a departure from all the fighting and robbing and deception that are such a part of the legend.

ANNE: Sort of. This story takes place during a time of peace and harmony in the land.

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ALBERT: Robin and Marion have been married nearly twenty years.

ANNE: They have but one child whom is about to come of age.

(ANNE and ALBERT exit USR arm in arm. The lights come up on the stage. It is empty for a beat, then young ROBIN, a girl who is dressed as a boy of the forest would be with her hair up under a hat, enters and goes to CS. SHE turns to face her opponent, LITTLE LITTLE JOHN, who follows her. FRIAR TICK and MADOLYN enter, stopping at USL. ROBIN and LL JOHN carry long poles; their "battle" resumes as their poles crash together.)

ROBIN: Had enough yet, Little Little John? Ready to concede?

LL JOHN: You shan't be talking me out of victory this time, Robin of Locksley. Throw down your pole and confess that I am your superior, and I shall let you off easy with only one dunking in the river.

ROBIN: You speak valiantly for one who has so often peered upon me from the underside of the water!

LL JOHN: Not today, you puffed up toad! You shall soon join your brothers for a chorus on the lily pads!

FRIAR TICK: Please, please Robin! Enough of the revelry! You know the Queen is due this morning and you must make ready for her!

ROBIN: I'm as ready as need be, my jolly friend!

MADOLYN: Oh, Robin! You know I am charged with your preparedness! It will be a sad day for me if you are to greet the Queen in this manner!

ROBIN: Lady Madolyn, you fret too much. Have I ever allowed the consequences of my sin to fall upon your shoulder?

MADOLYN: You have promised not, and yet is has, for that is my station in this life!

ROBIN: *(Knocking LL JOHN down and crossing to HER.)*
Fear not, Madolyn, for quickly approaches our eighteenth birthdays, yours and mine.

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MADOLYN: How very true as we were born but hours apart
and I have been your willing servant ever since.

ROBIN: But when we are both of age you shall be my
servant no more. I shall make a gift to you of your own
life.

MADOLYN: Robin, what nonsense. Such a thing is seldom
done! *(SHE attempts to dust ROBIN off, straightening her
clothes as best as she can.)*

ROBIN: Then we shall begin a new tradition. Did not my
own father spit in the eye of propriety when he stole from
the rich to feed the poor!

FRIAR TICK: Aye, but that was a different time. Not such
as this! The poor are not taxed so heavily. The Queen
deals with her subjects fairly, and they are able to provide
for themselves!

LL JOHN: Truer words were never spoken. These are good
times, indeed!

ROBIN: Good times? Bah! All this peace has made mush
of men's brains!

MADOLYN: Robin!

ROBIN: And nags of women! Why, what good is it to shoot
an arrow straight and true, or defeat a foe at swords, or
have a gift for strategy when the world is at peace?

FRIAR TICK: What good, indeed?

ROBIN: What's needed is a good conflict we can sink our
teeth into! A battle against the forces of evil that would
seek to undermine good!

LADY MARIAN: *(Offstage.)* Robin!

LL JOHN: I fear you shall have a conflict to deal with
momentarily, young Robin. Your Lady Mother calls.

FRIAR TICK: No doubt the Queen has arrived!

MADOLYN: And you unready to receive her! It shall be my
head, sure as the trees grow in Sherwood Forest!

LADY MARIAN: *(Entering SL.)* Robin! There you are! Why
aren't you dressed? *(To MADOLYN.)* Madolyn, I gave
strict orders Robin was to be ready before noon to meet
Her Majesty, the Queen, who honors us with a visit this
very morning!

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