

BABES IN THE WOOD

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CHARACTER & PLOT SYNOPSIS

Boo the scheming Sir Silas Nottingham, Sheriff of Nottingham, and his henchmen as they plot diabolical deeds to steal the fortunes of the innocent babes, and cheer our dashing hero, Robin Hood and his Merry Men as they do their best to thwart the evil plans!

All is not well in Nottingham! The wicked Sheriff is growing rich on the many taxes he is forcing the poor townsfolk to pay and he is just about to become even richer. Pip and Penny, recently orphaned and heirs to vast fortunes have been entrusted into his care and he is hatching a horrible plan to make sure that he will inherit the cash and marry Maid Marion into the bargain.

All that stands in his way is the very brave and dashing Robin Hood and his Merry Men, the fearsome Nanny Coddle, brainless Dave Knave (the wannabe outlaw) and a rather overworked Fairy. Will they succeed in thwarting the evil plot and beat the Sheriff and his villainous henchmen?

A new script jam-packed with jokes, slapstick, gunge, loveable characters and all the magic of traditional pantomime with enough audience participation to leave you hoarse by the end of the show!

CHARACTER NOTES

- Robin Hood** *Female*
Romantic lead and head of the outlaw band. Over the top, heroic and full of dashing and daring do! Every quality you would expect from a legendary hero.
- Maid Marion** *Female*
The Sheriff's niece and Principal Girl. In love with Robin. Resourceful & not a wet lead!
- Nurse Molly Coddle** *Male*
Nurse to the babes. Traditional Dame Character. Central to the slapstick routines.
- Sheriff of Nottingham** *Male*
The villain of the piece. Money grabbing and greedy. Truly mean, despicable and evil.
- The Fairy** *Female*
The supernatural element. Speaks in rhyme. Very busy modern fairy with mobile and email. Forever getting confused as to which show she is in and needs to be reminded.
- "Dangerous" Dave Knave** *Male*
Silly Billy character / link man. Lives in the town and desperate to join the band but has yet to pass the outlaw tests. A bit dippy but has a heart of gold.
- Friar Tuck** *Male*
A member of Robin Hood's Merry Men.
- Little John** *Male*
A member of Robin Hood's Merry Men.
- Will Scarlet** *Male or Female*
A member of Robin Hood's Merry Men.
- Alana Dale** *Male or Female*
A member of Robin Hood's Merry Men.
- Pip** *Male (Boy)*
Ward to the Sheriff. One of the Babes.
- Penny** *Female (Girl)*
Ward to the Sheriff. The other Babe!
- Block** *Male*
One half of the Comedy henchmen double act. A small time crook and hoodlum way out of his depth with the ruthless Sheriff. The brains of the outfit, which is not saying much!
- Tackle** *Male or Female*
The other half of the Comedy henchmen double act. The dense one!
- Chorus (Adults and Children)** *Male & Female*
Villagers, Outlaws, Guards, Attendants, Dancers, Forest Animals etc. The script includes a number of small speaking parts and chorus lines that can be shared out.

THE PLOT

ACT ONE

Prologue

Front of cloth

Featuring: *The Fairy*

The Fairy welcomes the audience and after making the mistake of talking about the wrong pantomime, explains she is a very busy fairy and may need reminding which show she is in from time to time. She also explains how King Richard is on crusade and that the babes, Pip and Penny have been left in the care of Nanny Molly Coddle who is bringing them to Nottingham to be under the protection of the Sheriff, Sir Silas Rottingham, a thoroughly evil piece of work!

Scene One – Nottingham Market Square

Main stage

Featuring: *The chorus as Townsfolk, Dave Knave, The Sheriff, 2 Guards, Nurse Molly, Alan Dale, Will Scarlet, Little John & Friar Tuck*

The chorus of townspeople open with a suitable rousing **song**. “Dangerous” Dave Knave explains how the poor are being persecuted by the evil Sheriff and that Robin Hood is their only hope. He also explains how he would love to join Robin’s outlaw band. Unfortunately, he still needs to pass the entrance exam. ‘Dangerous’ is his self adopted title which everyone forgets and throughout the show call him Dizzy, Daft, Delirious etc (in fact anything else that begins with D). Dave has a Robin Hood-style hat, which he is not yet allowed to wear. He leaves to one side of stage to be guarded by the audience - who have to call him whenever anyone goes near it! The Sheriff arrives with his guards to levy a new tax, post a new reward for Robin Hood and is then reminded by a guard that the babes are due to arrive that day along with Marion. He returns to the castle. Nurse Molly enters, complaining that she has just been accosted and almost robbed by Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet, Alana Dale and Little John who follow her on explaining that she is bound to be robbed if she wanders through the forest in fine clothes. Nurse Molly explains that she is dressed up nice to impress her two new charges (the Babes) in her job as Nanny at the castle. Dave then leads a **song** about how wonderful Robin Hood is!

Scene Two - The Sheriff’s Private Rooms

Front of tabs

Featuring: *The Sheriff, Nurse Molly, Pip, Penny & Maid Marion*

The Babes are introduced to the Sheriff by Nurse Molly. The Sheriff learning that he could inherit a vast fortune from the babes is delighted. Marion lectures the Sheriff about the state of the poor and the taxes and lets on she admires Robin Hood. The Sheriff is not best pleased and storms off! Nurse Molly shoos off the Babes to unpack and is left alone with Marion, who tells her about her increasingly stronger feelings for the heroic Robin Hood! Nurse tries and talk her out of it (she still hasn’t forgiven Robin for trying to rob her!).

Scene Three – Sherwood Forest

Main Stage

Featuring: *The Fairy, Block, Tackle, Friar Tuck, Little John, Alan Dale, Will Scarlet, Robin Hood, Dave Knave & the chorus as Outlaws*

The Fairy welcomes the audience to Sherwood Forest. The two hoodlums of the piece, Block and Tackle, enter on their way to Nottingham to honour a disposal contract with the Sheriff. They are waylaid by members of Robin's band but manage to rob the band by subtle trickery (which just shows the level of intelligence prevalent in the Merry Men)! When the band realise what has happened, they close in to cause bodily harm but are interrupted by Robin, who lets Block and Tackle go and then lectures the Merry Men about only robbing from the rich. We then have a sequence about new recruits for the Merry Men and "Dangerous" Dave takes the test to join the band. He fails again (although amusingly!). Robin calms it all down and sends them all off to carry out daring deeds of dashing do! Once the band has disappeared, Robin tells Little John of his secret love for Marion.

Scene Four - The Sheriff's Private Rooms

Front of tabs

Featuring: *The Sheriff, Block, Tackle & Maid Marion*

The Sheriff gets to meet his hired exterminators, Block and Tackle. After the initial confusion about their advert (the Sheriff believes them to be hired killers, they advertise themselves as pest control experts), he explains that he would like them to take the Babes into the forest and kill them, enabling him to inherit their estates and vast wealth. He also offers a bonus for the head of Robin Hood, and possible smaller bonuses for other parts of Robin as well. Block and Tackle are initially horrified by the idea but the money helps them agree to do it. Unfortunately for the rotten trio, they are overheard by Marion who is determined to thwart them!

Scene Five - The School Room

Main Stage

Featuring: *Nurse Molly, Block, Tackle, Dave Knave, Pip, Penny & the junior chorus as schoolchildren*

Nurse Molly is starting a school lesson for the babes in the castle. Block and Tackle attend the class disguised as school kids too. They want to ingratiate themselves with the Babes so they can get the opportunity to perform their task for the Sheriff. Dave joins in the mayhem towards the end. In the ensuing scene we include a vast selection of school-related jokes, some business with blackboards, a clock, tipping benches, a slapstick cane and plenty of visual humour!

Scene Six – The edge of Sherwood

Front of Cloth

Featuring: *Nurse Molly, Dave Knave, Maid Marion, the Sheriff & 2 Guards*

Marion tells Nurse Molly and Dave of the Sheriff's plan to dispose of the children. They decide that Dave must warn Robin to try and find the babes / save them in time. Dave leaves for Robin's camp, and Marion and Nanny are then surprised by the Sheriff who is leading a party hunting Robin and he takes them back to the castle.

Scene Seven– Deep in Sherwood Forest

Main Stage

Featuring: *Block, Tackle, Pip, Penny, the Fairy & dancers*

The Babes have been lured out to the woods by Block and Tackle, but they are unconcerned and having a great time playing and running rings around the baddies. The baddies, meanwhile, are having second thoughts about killing the babes. They are just not up to the job. The Babes then play a trick on the baddies showing how scary the woods are and finally Block and Tackle run off screaming. The Babes then realise that they are on their own, lost and cold and hungry. Now rather scared, they seek shelter under a tree and fall asleep. The Fairy appears and commands the woodland creatures and Spirits (played by the chorus in costumes) to cover the Babes with leaves and bring them food.

ACT TWO

Prologue

Front of cloth

Featuring: *The Fairy*

The Fairy recaps what is going on after welcoming the audience back to their seats.

Scene One – Deep in Sherwood Forest

Main Stage

Featuring: *Pip, Penny, Robin Hood, Dave Knave, Alana Dale, Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet, Little John & the chorus as Outlaws*

Robin and his band, with “Dangerous” Dave, are hunting for the Babes and find them under the tree. Robin and co. explain about the Sheriffs plot, and then try and cheer the Babes up about how exciting it is to live in the forest by singing a rousing **song**. Friar Tuck will be eating a snack, which includes chicken bones. He borrows Penny’s handkerchief to clean his fingers and leaves both the bones and handkerchief at the front of the stage.

Scene Two – The edge of Sherwood

Front of Cloth

Featuring: *Block & Tackle*

Block and Tackle head back towards the castle and are busy making up their cover story to break to the Sheriff. Then they discover the discarded bones from Friar Tuck’s snack with the Penny’s handkerchief and thinking that the babes have actually been eaten by wild animals break down in tears.

Scene Three – The Castle Kitchen

Main Stage

Featuring: *Maid Marion, Nurse Molly, Chorus of dancers, Dave Knave, the Sheriff, Block & Tackle*

The scene opens with Nurse Molly in a **song** and dance number. She then talks to Marion worrying about the Babes. The Sheriff arrives and, pretending to be upset, tells them that wild animals in the forest have eaten the Babes. He announces that he will be marrying Marion and instructs Nanny to prepare a feast for the marriage. He then leaves with Marion. Nurse

Molly is distraught about the loss of the Babes but then “Dangerous” Dave arrives to tell her that the Babes are safe with Robin and that he is devising a plan to win the day. Block and Tackle arrive to supervise celebratory preparations. We have a suitably messy scene here involving cakes, pies and cream stuff in which Dave and Nurse Molly get the villains suitably creamy.

Scene Four – The Outlaw Den

Front of Cloth

Featuring: *Pip, Penny, Robin Hood, Alana Dale, Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet, Little John, Dave Knave, Nurse Molly & the chorus as Outlaws*

Robin and his band are holding a rather ludicrous committee meeting. Nurse Molly runs on breathlessly, to tell Robin about the Sheriff’s plan to marry Marion after the annual Nottingham Tournament the next day. Robin realises that to rescue his girl and help the Babes he must attend that tournament!

Scene Five – The Castle Dungeons

Main Stage

Featuring: *Maid Marion, the Sheriff, Block, Tackle & Dave Knave*

The Sheriff is in the castle dungeon explaining his grand plan to Marion for the future, assisted by Block and Tackle who give a presentation of the Sheriff’s theme park proposals. Marion is not interested but is told that she will marry him anyway at the tournament the next day. There is a “Behind You” sequence with a suit of armour that comes to, which scares off the Sheriff and his henchmen. The suit of armour turns out to contain “Dangerous” Dave himself! Dave tells Marion that Robin is on his way to save her and beat the Sheriff and he will make his move at the Tournament.

Scene Six – The edge of Sherwood

Front of Cloth

Featuring: *The Fairy, Robin Hood, Alana Dale, Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet, Little John & Dave Knave*

The Fairy appears and gives us an update on how busy she is. Then, as Robin enters, she helps transform him into a disguise to fool the Sheriff during the following scene. The Merry Men and Dave cannot recognise Robin despite his pathetic disguise.

Scene Seven– The Tournament

Main Stage

Featuring: *Maid Marion, Nurse Molly, Pip, Penny, the Sheriff, Block, Tackle, Dave Knave, Robin Hood, Alana Dale, Friar Tuck, Will Scarlet, Little John and the chorus as Outlaws, Guards and Townsfolk*

This is the main show down. The Sheriff will be marrying Marion at the end of the Tournament! The Tournament is in mid flow and, as we join it, the Sheriff has already claimed all the prizes as no one will compete with him but then a disguised Robin challenges him at archery. There is a set-piece Archery contest with a target on which arrows appear. Robin wins the target shooting. Then Robin offers to show off his trick shots and makes the Sheriff look a fool. Robin reveals his true identity and there is a big swashbuckling sword fight between Robin, his men, the Sheriff, the sidekicks and guards. The Sheriff is beaten.

“Dangerous” Dave is awarded first-class outlaw status. Robin and Marion are united and the Outlaws head off to celebrate.

Scene Eight – The edge of Sherwood – The Song Sheet

Front of Cloth

Featuring: *Nurse Molly & Dave Knave*

An un-scripted scene with a suggested **sing along song** where Dave and Nurse Molly (or two other selected characters can draw raffle tickets, announce competition winners or whatever) and build up the audience into a frenzy whilst giving the rest of the cast a few minutes to get changed into finale costumes!

Scene Nine – The Finale / Walk down

Front of Cloth

Featuring: *Everyone!*

Final bows for the cast with rhyming couplets are provided for the principals in which we learn that King Richard has sent word of his return, Robin and his men are pardoned, the Sheriff is sacked and disgraced and the babes parents are safe and well Everyone, who deserves to, can now live happily ever after!