

EXTRACT

ROBIN HOOD AND THE BABES IN THE WOOD

Tony Nicholls

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ROBIN HOOD AND THE BABES IN THE WOOD

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<h1>ROBIN HOOD AND THE BABES IN THE WOOD</h1>

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE GREEN MAN

ROBIN HOOD
PUG

SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM
CONSTABLE TIM
CONSTABLE TAM

THE BABES: BIBS
BOBS

LADY VICTORIA PARK
MAID MARION, her daughter
FLOSSIE, Maid Marion's Maid

WITCH HAZEL

HERNE THE HUNTER

THE WELL OF LONELINESS

SPRITES: PARSLEY
SAGE
ROSEMARY
THYME

THE BRONTES: CHARLOTTE
ANNE
EMILY

TOURISTS: LITTLE JACK HORNER
BO PEEP
LITTLE BOY BLUE

MERRIE MEN: FUSSY
LITERAL JOHN
BLIND FREDDY
RONALDO

YOUNG ROBERT
YOUNG GUY
TOUR GUIDE
RENT MAN
KNAVE OF HEARTS
WOLF
MARY LAMB
THE BEAST

CITIZENS
WILD RIDERS

ROBIN HOOD AND THE BABES IN THE WOOD

First performed by the Hayman Theatre Company
at the Subiaco Theatre Centre, Perth, Western Australia on November 28, 2007.

Directed by Duncan Sharp
Designed by Emma Caporn
Music composed by Brent Hill
Musical direction by Sarah Fay

THE STORY

The Green Stone which keeps Sherwood Forest safe has been stolen. Robin Hood, falsely accused of the theft is doing everything he can to force the Sheriff of Nottingham – the true thief – to confess. But the Sheriff has other plans – he wants to take control of the forest by marrying its owner, the fair maid Marion of Chigwell, Robin's former sweetheart! Before he can do this however, her feisty mama, Lady Victoria Park, says he has to be rich - and he isn't! But then his brother dies and leaves him in charge of the Babes which is when he discovers that -

.... if the children chance to die
Ere they to age should come,
Their uncle should possess their wealth;
For so the will did run...

Meanwhile, without the Green Stone to keep them down, the dark powers that lurk beneath the forest are beginning to awake.....!

Will the Stone be found in time? Will the Babes escape their uncle's wicked plots and save the forest? Will Robin and Marion be reunited? Will they ever make postman-flavoured Chum? And just what is the secret of the Sid Cup? There's only one way to find out - !

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Most of my pantomime scripts have been written specifically for performance in a conventional proscenium theatre with a front curtain and forestage. This means the action is intended to proceed with an almost Elizabethan swiftness as it alternates between full-stage scenes and short transitional 'front-scenes' played in front of the curtain while sets are being changed behind.

However *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood* was written for performance at the Subiaco Theatre which has an open platform stage with neither proscenium nor front curtain – and no easy way of creating either. This, combined with the fact that, unusually, I would not be directing the production myself, made me feel freer to let myself go, structurally speaking.

In revising the text for use by other companies who may be using more conventional theatres and thus have the front/back scene option available, I have suggested points at which I think the curtains may most usefully be closed or opened.

The number of actors required is very flexible. For larger companies the script allows opportunities for expanding the cast; for smaller groups there is obviously scope for lots of doubling. And whilst I am traditionalist enough to prefer that Robin Hood be played by a girl as Principal Boy and that Vicky be played by a male actor as a Dame role, the gender of the other players may be varied according to the resources of the company.

Finally, regarding the songs; the text includes the lyrics used in the original production but I'm quite happy for directors to replace and/or remove them and to add more if desired. It is the general practice in England for companies to choose their own songs and many follow the eighteenth and nineteenth century pantomime tradition of taking well known traditional and/or contemporary songs and adding new lyrics.

TN

ROBIN HOOD AND THE BABES IN THE WOOD**PART ONE****ONE: THE STONE**

MUSIC PRELUDE, POSSIBLY INCORPORATING THE TUNE OF 'JOHN BARLEYCORN'. LIGHTS COME UP ON AN ATTRACTIVE FOREST GLADE AS THE SPRITES RUN IN GIGGLING AND PLAYING AMONGST THE AUDIENCE.

AFTER A MOMENT WE HEAR THE STRANGE VOICE OF THE GREEN MAN:

GREEN MAN: Sprites!

THE SPRITES STOP AND LOOK TOWARDS THE STAGE.
THE FACE OF THE GREEN MAN APPEARS AMIDST THE FOLIAGE.

SPRITES: Master! What is it?

GREEN MAN: Listen! Once upon a time there were two boys....

MUSIC. TWO YOUNG MEN APPEAR. THEY ARE ROBERT OF LOCKSLEY AND GUY OF GISBORNE. THE SPRITES MOVE TO THE SIDES.

ROBERT: Where are we going, Guy? I thought we were going to practice with our bows.

GUY: Never mind that! Do you know what they call this place? The Temple of the Green Man!

ROBERT: Who's the Green Man?

GUY: He's supposed to be the guardian of the forest or something. But look -

HE MOVES LEAVES ASIDE UPSTAGE TO REVEAL A GLOWING GREEN JEWEL

ROBERT: Wow! What's that?

GUY: The Green Stone! They say that as long as the Stone lies there the forest can never be destroyed.

ROBERT: Really?

GUY: No, it's all rubbish. There's no such person as the Green Man!

THE SPRITES HISS SOFTLY. ROBERT LOOKS AROUND.

But they also say that the Stone brings greatness and good fortune to whomever owns it...!

HE REACHES OUT TO TAKE THE STONE BUT ROBERT STOPS HIM

ROBERT: No!

GUY: What's the matter?

ROBERT: Leave it!

GUY: Why? What's the good of it here?

ROBERT: It protects the forest!

GUY: Look, you're going to be rich. I'm just a younger son, remember. I have no money, nothing! I need all the good fortune I can get.

AGAIN HE REACHES FOR THE STONE AND AGAIN ROBIN STOPS HIM

ROBERT: It's stealing.

GUY: Coward!

ROBERT: It's not cowardly to know the difference between right and wrong.

GUY: You're such a goody-goody!

ROBERT: At least I'm not a thief. I'm going – and if you've got any sense you'll come too.

ROBERT GOES. AS HE DOES SO HE ACCIDENTALLY DROPS AN ARROW.

GUY: Goody-goody!

GUY TURNS BACK TO THE STONE. THE SPRITES LEAN IN TO WATCH.

THYME: What happened then, master?

SAGE: Did the boy take the stone?

GREEN MAN: Yes.

GUY TAKES THE STONE

Not only that –

GUY SEES THE ARROW WHICH ROBERT DROPPED. HE LOOKS BACK AT THE STONE'S HIDING PLACE. THEN HE SMILES AND PLACES THE ARROW ON THE GROUND IN FRONT OF IT.

He made it look as if his friend had taken it!

THE SPRITES HISS. GUY PUTS THE STONE IN HIS POCKET AND RUNS OFF.

PARSLEY: What happened then?

GREEN MAN: The thief prospered. His friend was arrested, tried and banished, never to return, on pain of death.

SAGE: But why are you telling us this now?

GREEN MAN: Because the forest is in great danger!

SPRITES: Danger!?

GREEN MAN: There are dark powers that live below the earth. While the Stone is in place they are kept weak. But without it their strength grows. Unless the Stone is replaced soon they will begin to break free - !

SUDDENLY THERE COMES A WILD CACKLE OF LAUGHTER AND A POINTED BLACK HAT BEGINS TO RISE FROM THE PLINTH WHERE THE STONE LAY.

Down! Down!

A COUPLE OF SPRITES FORCE THE HAT DOWN AND OUT OF SIGHT AS THE CACKLING FADES

GREEN MAN: Well done. But next time it may not be so easy. And witches are not the worst we must fear.

PARSLEY: What can we do?

GREEN MAN: Nothing. It was a mortal who took the Stone – mortals must put it back!

CHORD OF MUSIC. ROBIN HOOD APPEARS IN A SPOT STAGE RIGHT. THE SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM APPEARS IN A SPOT STAGE LEFT.

THYME: That's Robin Hood!

SPRITES: He's cool!

ALTHOUGH UNAWARE OF THE SPRITES ROBIN PREENS JUST A LITTLE

ROSEMARY: And that's the Sheriff of Nottingham!

SPRITES: He's not cool!

PARSLEY: They're bitter enemies –

SAGE: Robin Hood teases him –

ROSEMARY: And takes his things –

THYME: And the Sheriff goes red in the face and stamps his feet –

SHERIFF DOES SO

PARSLEY: And Robin just smiles –

ROBIN DOES SO

SPRITES: And looks cool!

ROBIN DOES SO

SAGE: Can he save the forest?

GREEN MAN: Not without help - !

CHORD OF MUSIC. THE FACES OF THE BABES APPEAR UPSTAGE, LOOKING AS INNOCENT AS CAN BE. ALL INCLUDING THE SHERIFF AND ROBIN TURN TO LOOK AT THEM.

PARSLEY/
SAGE: Them?

ROSEMARY/
THYME: They're just kids!

ALL: What can they do?

GREEN MAN: We must wait and see!

A BRIEF TABLEAU. THE SHERIFF AND ROBIN HOOD DISAPPEAR AND THE SPRITES DISPERSE. THE GREEN MAN'S FACE IS THE ONLY THING VISIBLE AS THE CURTAINS CLOSE.

TWO: THE CASTLE CATACOMBS

PUG ENTERS (POSSIBLE HELLO ROUTINE HERE)

PUG: Hello! My name's Pug! I'm a friend of Robin Hood and I have a very important role in this play – !

HOLDS UP A SAUSAGE ROLL

It's a sausage roll! But seriously, I am very important – and so are you. Oh yes! Because you have a part to play in this story too. So we'd better get started - Robin, where are you?

ROBIN: Over here, Pug, old chap!

ROBIN HOOD ENTERS FROM THE OTHER SIDE

PUG: Fantastic! Now where am I?

ROBIN: Deep in the caves under Nottingham Castle!

PUG: Nottingham Castle! But that's the home and headquarters of your devilish arch-enemy, the Sheriff of Nottingham!

ROBIN: Exactly!

PUG: But what have we come here for?

ROBIN: To get something! We take from the rich and give to the poor, remember? You know, like Labour governments used to do. But first we have to find our way into the main cavern –

PUG: Look out – someone's coming!

THE TOUR GUIDE ENTERS FROM THE AUDITORIUM WITH A GROUP OF JABBERING TOURISTS SOME DRESSED AS NURSERY RHYME CHARACTERS.

GUIDE: Ladies and gentlemen, if you would just keep together and stop jabbering in foreign for a moment – thank you *so* much.

ROBIN: A tour party! Perfect! Put these on –

THEY THROW ON DISGUISES, SUNGLASSES, CAMERAS ETC

GUIDE: Now, we've shown you some truly amazing sights on our Womens Weekly 'Wonders of the Western World' Tour – you've seen the very beanstalk which Jack climbed -

TOURISTS: Mmmm!

GUIDE: Some of the more tasteless among you have even bought pieces of the dead giant to take home.

SOME WAVE HUGE GIFT-WRAPPED FINGERS ABOUT

TOURISTS: Mmmm!

PUG: Gosh, they look yummy – !

ROBIN: Pug!

GUIDE: But now we come to the highlight of our trip, one of the true Wonders of the World – the Sid Cup!

THREE: THE SID CUP

MUSIC. THE CURTAINS OPEN REVEALING A CAVERN IN WHICH THREE RATHER TARTY AND SUPERANNATED MAIDENS ARE STANDING AROUND A PLINTH. IN THE CENTRE IS A LARGE SPARKLING LIDDED TANKARD SITTING ON AN ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF A BIRDBATH. THE MAIDENS POINT WAVE AND POSE TO THE TOURISTS LIKE THE HAPLESS FEMALES ON GAME SHOWS.

TOURISTS: Mmmm!

GUIDE: This magnificent goblet, which is believed to have been used by the famous bandit El Sid himself is totally unique and valuable beyond price – although authentic tupperware replicas can be purchased from the nearby Knottingham Knicknacke Kshoppe for only \$17.50 plus GST. This priceless old relic is guarded, as you see, by three other priceless old relics – the famous Bronte Sisters – Charlotte, Anne and Emily! You may take photos if you wish – though I generally use a camera myself. Hahaha!

NO RESPONSE

Oh god.

JACK HORNER: Can I put my thumb in?

GUIDE: No, Little Jack Horner! It is forbidden – and those lithe and lissom lovelies over there may look merely ornamental but I assure you, they are armed to the teeth!

SISTERS PRODUCE TEETH AND WAVE THEM ABOUT MENACINGLY

Put them away! Now, if everyone would follow me we'll move on to our next exciting experience, a meeting with the only person on the planet who hasn't had a cooking program on the ABC!

BO PEEP: I've lost my sheep!

GUIDE: Oh, not again! Just leave them alone and you'll find them in the gift shop, being fleeced with everyone else. Now please, do stay together! And if you think you're bored, imagine how I feel.

THEY GO OFF. PUG GOES TO FOLLOW BUT ROBIN STOPS HIM.

ROBIN: Pug, we didn't come here for the tour, remember?

PUG: Then why did we come here?

ROBIN: To steal the Sid Cup!

PUG: But why?

ROBIN: To really annoy the Sheriff!

PUG: Of course.

ROBIN: *And* because it's the next step in my master plan to restore my reputation, save the world, find true happiness and reveal who I really am!

PUG: But you're Robin Hood!

ROBIN: That's not my real name. It's assumed!

PUG: Assumed! Hey, you're not Einstein, are you?

ROBIN: No, why?

PUG: Just something for the Bob Dylan fans. But how are we going to steal the cup? Not only is it guarded by those big butch Bronte sisters, but it's on a plinth which is standing in a sort of ba –

A TWITCHING IMPEDIMENT FROM PUG

In a sort of ba - in a babababa - !

ROBIN: Say it, Pug, say it! The only way to overcome fear is to face it head on.

PUG: It's in a b-bath!

ROBIN: There, you said it! It's in a b-bath. Well done! Now, if we could only stop you going crazy every time someone says walkies, life would be perfect.

PUG: Walkies!

ROBIN: Sh!

ROBIN STIFLES PUG AS A CUCKOO CLOCK STRIKES. THE SISTERS NATURALLY SPEAK IN BROAD YORKSHIRE ACCENTS.

CHARLOTTE: Hey up, sisters! Tis time to get stuck into yon gradely Yorkshire pudding!

ANNE/
EMILY: Tha's right, our Charlotte!

PUG: Food!

ROBIN: Come back! This is our chance! While that tubby trio are packing in the pud we can slip in and snaffle the Sid Cup. But remember – be quiet!

THE SISTERS GATHER DOWNSTAGE AND TAKE OUT PUDDINGS. EMILY TAKES OUT HER NOTEBOOK. ROBIN AND PUG SNEAK UP ON THE PLINTH.

ANNE: What I say is, you just can't beat Yorkshire pudding!

CHARLOTTE: No - cos if you do t'bits go everywhere.

EMILY: Does anyone know how you spell 'wuthering'?

CHARLOTTE/
ANNE: No.

EMILY: Okay.

ROBIN AND PUG ARE AT THE PLINTH.
PUG REACHES FOR THE CUP BUT ROBIN STOPS HIM.

ROBIN: No! The plinth is spring loaded. When the weight of the Cup is removed it sets off the alarm.

PUG: So what do we do?

ROBIN: We have to replace it with something of equal weight. Give me - the bone!

PUG: No, no, not - the bone!

ROBIN: (GRABBING BONE FROM PUG) Yes!

PUG: But it was my mother's!

ROBIN: Yuk!

PUG: I mean she gave it to me! Right after I bit my first Jehovah's Witness.

ROBIN: Too bad!

THE SISTERS LOOK ROUND, ROBIN AND PUG DUCK DOWN.

ANNE: What was that?

CHARLOTTE: Nothing.

EMILY: It was probably the wind – wuthering.

ANNE: Look here, our Emily, we don't how to spell it, okay?

EMILY: But it's for the title of my novel!

ANNE: Why don't you just call it something else? What about t'Wind in t'Willows?

EMILY: Eee, that's a champion notion!

CROSSES OUT LINE AND WRITES

ROBIN: Right, now I have to be really quick –

PUG: Couldn't I have one last sniff?

ROBIN: Quiet! I have to concentrate.

HE PRACTICES SWITCHING THE BONE AND THE CUP

ANNE: By the way, our Charley, how's your leg?

CHARLOTTE: It's a lot better, our Annie.

ANNE: But you could hardly walk yesterday.

CHARLOTTE: I know, but I found this gradely stuff. You just rub it on and –

ANNE: What's it called?

CHARLOTTE: I've got it right here -

SHE RUMMAGES IN HER RETICULE

ROBIN: Okay – I'm ready. Now Pug, I want absolute silence.

PUG: Right.

ROBIN: Not a word.

PUG: No.

ROBIN: Not a sound!

PUG: Okay.

ROBIN PREPARES TO MAKE THE SWAP BUT JUST AS HE IS ABOUT TO DO SO:

CHARLOTTE: Here it is!

HOLDS UP LARGE TUBE OF OINTMENT MARKED 'WALK-EZE'

See? Walk-Eze.

PUG: Walk-Eze? Walkies!!

PUG GOES CRAZY. THE SISTERS TURN ROUND IN ALARM.

ALL: Aaah! Someone's stealing the Sid Cup!

THEY PANIC, BLOW WHISTLES, HURL YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS ETC

ROBIN: Run for it!

THEY GO TO FLEE AS THE SISTERS DITHER AND CONSTABLES TIM AND TAM RUN IN FROM THE OTHER SIDE

TIM: Hold it!

TAM: Nobody move!

PRODUCES CAMERA, ALL SMILE FOR FLASH.

TIM: Okay?

TAM: Have to see how it comes out but I'm quietly confident.

TIM: He's entering the Crime Scene of the Year Contest.

CHARLOTTE: Who are you?

TIM: I am Constable Tim.

TAM: And I am Constable Tam.

ANNE: Policemen?

EMILY: But those are pilot's helmets!

TIM: We're in plane clothes.

THEY LAUGH, THE SISTERS GROAN.

EMILY: You mean – you're the flying squad!

THEY LOOK AT HER. NOBODY LAUGHS.

ANNE/

CHARLOTTE: Be quiet, our Em'ly.

TAM: Now, you have the right to remain silent –

TIM: And after that joke, we strongly advise you to do so –

TAM: But we must point out that anything you do say will be taken down and turned into evidence against you.

ANNE: It wasn't us!

CHARLOTTE: It was him!

TIM/
TAM: Who?

ALL: Robin Hood!

FOUR: ROBIN PAYS THE RENT

A GREAT HEROIC CHORD OF MUSIC. THE LIGHTS CHANGE.
CITIZENS APPEAR FROM LEFT AND RIGHT. TIM AND TAM RUN OFF.

CITIZENS L: Robin Hood?

CITIZENS R: Robin Hood?

ALL: Did someone say Robin Hood?

#1 ROBIN HOOD

ALL: When you're deep in trouble
And the future's looking grey
When there's nothing in your pockets
But a load of bills to pay
When you've racked your brains for answers
But nothing's any good –
There's just one name to call on –
Call on Robin Hood!

Robin Hood, Robin Hood
Robin Hood, Robin Hood!

ROBIN: I'm the man to lend a hand just when you need it!

ALL: Robin Hood, Robin Hood
Robin Hood, Robin Hood!

Whatever you're expecting – he'll/I'll exceed it!

ROBIN: Wherever there's injustice
Or the people are oppressed
My merrie men and I will try
To do our very best
To vanquish all the villains
And support the brave and good -
It's a name you can rely on
The name is –

ALL: Robin Hood!

Robin Hood, Robin Hood
Robin Hood, Robin Hood!

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