

NOTTINGHAM
by

James Robinson

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INT. MEDIEVAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

Bare rock walls make it feel like an underground dungeon.

Facing each other, tight in shot so little of their surroundings are visible - ROBIN HOOD, 25, dashing handsome - and the SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM, 45 fat, sweaty, ugly, everything you'd expect.

Lighting from below gives the scene a dramatic, staged feel. What is causing this up-light and where they are isn't clear however due to the tightness of the shot's framing.

A "Korngold"-like classical musical score helps gives the scene a dated 1940s feel to it.

ROBIN HOOD

So it comes to this, sheriff.

SHERIFF

You won't live past this night,
Robin Hood, I swear it.

ROBIN HOOD

And I swear this land and its people
will be free of your tyranny.

(beat)

T'is our fate, it seems. Our
destiny. To fight. For one to win.

-- As the Sheriff pulls his sword with a flourish, his expression almost comically over-the-top.

SHERIFF

(overly dramatic/loud)

And one to die!

Robin and the Sheriff begin a sword fight heightened in its intensity by being filmed in slow-motion.

As an off-camera voice (a MINSTREL) begins his song --

MINSTREL

When Richard was King
of old England,
Away he would be
fighting in foreign lands.
So we needed a champion
who'd look out for good.
He came to us ready,
the great Robin Hood.

-- As the shot pulls out/reveals the scene isn't a dungeon or chamber, but rather a small theater stage in a tavern (THE

TRIP TO JERUSALEM) built into the side of a rock face with its walls rough stone. The up-light is foot-light/candles.

The minstrel stands to the side of the stage --

MINSTREL

(chorus)

Twas ten years ago,
twas ten years ago.
Robin came to us ready,
twas ten years ago.

At the same time the slow-motion depiction of the sword fight returns to normal speed before our eyes, revealing "the battle" to be stiff and rehearsed more than "life and death".

MINSTRAL

For Nottingham's people
were fearful and poor,
taxed, beaten and bullied
in the name of the law.
By Robin's sworn foe,
a hideous man,
Geoffrey Moncette,
Sheriff of Nottingham

The crowd watches, rapt. Some cheer, some drink, some belch.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM/THE TRIP TO JERUSALEM INN - NIGHT

HUGH, 25, deputy sheriff of Nottingham, stands in the street, watches the Inn. He hops from foot to foot in the snow.

From the shadows a man emerges. Clad in a black cloak, he has an equally dark expression. GEOFFREY MONCETTE, 33, SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM, handsome, nevertheless has a melancholy.

He nods to Hugh.

HUGH

How goes the night?

GEOFFREY

The night goes coldly, Hugh. And
the better for it being a memory in
the morning to come.

HUGH

Oh, you're feeling more cheerful
than usual. I am glad.

GEOFFREY

Are they inside?

HUGH

I had a look. Quick like you told me. Aye, they abide and rich with coin they are too.

GEOFFREY

Remember, the key this night -- sharp eyes, sharp actions. These are not men to take lightly.
(takes a step towards inn)
Let's get this done.

SUPER (in Medieval Script): In the year of our Lord 1205

INT. THE TRIP TO JERULSALEM - NIGHT

Geoffrey and Hugh enter. Geoffrey sees what the drama is, rolls his eyes. The crowd roars with laughter, sings along.

MINSTREL

(chorus)

Twass ten years ago,
twass ten years ago.
The Sheriff was hideous,
twass ten years ago.

He walks off past the audience, ignoring them and the play. He passes a small BOY, drinking from a tankard of ale. The drunken boy glares at Geoffrey sticks his tongue out.

One local, FERRET, an aptly named young ne'er-do-well, sits near the back, notices Geoffrey, chuckles, glances at the man next to him, a visiting PILGRIM.

FERRET

That's rich.
(off Pilgrim's glance)
-- That he comes stomping in now.

PILGRIM

Who?

FERRET

Oh aye, you pilgrims passing
through wouldn't know. That's the
Sheriff of Nottingham.

The pilgrim looks at Geoffrey (at which moment Ferret deftly steals the man's money pouch), then looks back to the stage --

PILGRIM

(re: stage/performer)

He's not fat and warty. Why don't the players show him how he really is?

FERRET

N'where'd be the fun in that?

As if Geoffrey senses he's being talked about - he stops, glares at the two men - who see this, turn back to the play --

The LANDLORD sees Geoffrey, walks over --

LANDLORD

Sheriff, it's a drink you're after, I trust. Come, it's on me.

GEOFFREY

I seek men abiding within, Tom. They've broken the law.

LANDLORD

I don't want trouble.

GEOFFREY

Neither do I.

Geoffrey turns back to the task at hand - three men sitting to the rear of the tavern, many drained flagons lying around them evidence of a night of excess.

GEOFFREY

I've be looking for you.

-- The three men, HAL, CYRIL and TUNNY, 30s, brawny, unkempt, register Geoffrey's presence --

HAL

Hail, Sheriff.

(re. Stageplay)

Great likeness, him up there playing you.

GEOFFREY

(sarcastic)

You flatter me.

CYRIL

Quite the gripping yarn. On tender-hooks, me.

GEOFFREY

(re: Stage)

That -- is a work of fiction.

(MORE)

GEOFFREY (cont'd)
(re: Tunny, Cyril, Hal)
Fact. A pilgrim. One Elizabeth
Trotter -- purse stolen -- by three
men, descriptions matching yours.

TUNNY
What a coincidence.

GEOFFREY
(nods at Tunny's coin purse)
The purse, crimson velvet with a
gold sash. Like the one you hold.

CYRIL
Another coincidence. Why it's nigh
miraculous.

GEOFFREY
Give me whatever money you haven't
drank or whored away. The Trotter
woman can continue on to the Holy Land.

HAL
You know we're crusaders? Once were at
least.

TUNNY
Aye, n'we seen n'fought n'killed
more'n you'll ever know.

GEOFFREY
Yes. But like me and Robin Hood.
(sneer/contempt)
That was a long time ago.

The crusaders lunge forward -- in one continuous motion
Geoffrey grabs, hurls a stool at Tunny's chest, punches Cyril
hard in the face, stuns him.

-- As Hugh charges impetuously, doesn't see Hail's dagger.

GEOFFREY
Dagger!

Geoffrey grabs Hugh, pushes him aside -- into a wooden
upright ceiling brace beam that dazes the deputy.

At the same time, Hal stabs at Geoffrey who raises his arm to
save his face and -- gets the sleeve of his coat impaled by
Hal's knife onto the same upright beam that dazed Hugh.

Hal tries to free his dagger so he can strike again, but in
that moment - Geoffrey pulls a cudgel and smashes Hal in the
face. Hal falls back, nose spurting blood as --

-- Tunny charges Geoffrey still trying to free his sleeve, gives Geoffrey a savage kidney punch. Geoffrey winches, drops his cudgel --

-- But responds with a head butt. As Tunny recoils, so Geoffrey tears his sleeve free, tries to yank out the imbedded dagger for his own use, but before he can --

Cyril charges anew, propels the pair of them into a back kitchen where food is being prepared. Hal follows trying to get to Geoffrey. As the men stumble in, a female cook flees.

The men separate. Cyril pulls a dagger from a hilt in his collar, advances on the weaponless Geoffrey with murder in his eyes. Geoffrey looks around for a weapon, sees --

-- A goose, hanging, aging. He grabs the bird's carcass, using it as a club to drive both Hal and Cyril back. Feathers fly everywhere like snow flakes.

In the distraction Geoffrey sees -- a pot of giblets, snatches it, BANG, round-houses Hal.

As Cyril lunges again with his dagger, Geoffrey sees the large pot hook (shaped like a curved two-pronged fork) the giblet pot had hung from. He grabs it and uses the arch of the fork to pin Cyril's knife hand to a chopping board.

Geoffrey then grabs Cyril's head, rams it into a caldron of hot soup, dunking him over and over, subduing him. Then yanking Cyril's up by his lank hair --

-- Smashes Cyril's face into the kitchen's stone wall. Cyril is out for the count, but then --

-- A FIERCE ROAR. Tunny charges. A HIGHER PITCHED YELL -- as from nowhere Hugh runs in, leaps onto Tunny's back -- to no avail, is carried along towards Geoffrey who --

-- Scoops a burning log from underneath the caldron, tosses it back and forth between hands like a hot potato then uses it like a bat to smash Tunny a haymaker in the face, with a cascade of sparks.

Tunny falls back, collapsing on Hugh who gasps and squirms under the unconscious crusader.

HUGH

Geoffrey. Assistance.

GEOFFREY

(helping Hugh up)

You were Hugh. Great assistance.

INT. THE TRIP TO JERUSALEM - MOMENTS LATER

-- Geoffrey and Hugh drag the dazed, bloodied crusaders towards the tavern door, past the actors and audience, all stunned silent by this display of real violence.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Bully.

GEOFFREY

What's the matter with you people,
these men were criminals.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Bastard bully.

Then the Minstrel starts to sing, looks Geoffrey in the eye --

MINSTREL

Now Richard is dead
and King John has the throne.
Robin went wandering
leaving Nottingham alone.
There's but one thing the same,
tho we all wish it nay.
That bullying Sheriff
labors on to this day.

Geoffrey is about to respond, thinks better of it. Then -- he is suddenly aware of wetness on his leggings. The boy from earlier pisses on him, gleefully. The crowd's laughs.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM/THE TRIP TO JERUSALEM INN - NIGHT

-- Back out into the cold snow. The chorus "twas ten years ago" faint but audible, can be heard from inside the tavern --

HUGH

What now, Sheriff?

Geoffrey pushes the stunned, now compliant crusaders down the street away from Hugh.

GEOFFREY

I can handle things from here. Jail
for them. You -- away to your family.

Geoffrey makes move to go. The sadness settling upon him anew even as he does so --

HUGH

Cheer up, Sheriff. It will soon be
Christmas.

Geoffrey looks back at his deputy, gives him a half-hearted smile, then pushes his prisoners onward. His dark cloak soon lost to the shadows --

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - NIGHT

A MAN runs. Fast, agile, seemingly at one with the woods around him. In and out of the snow covered trees --

-- He seems to be a pilgrim monk (thick beard), but he moves with a speed and agility unsuited to such men. And then --

-- We see the cause of his flight. HORSEMEN, ill-defined in the darkness, but big and with the air of violence about them. Their swords ready.

One horseman is way in the lead than the others more lost in the forest's shadows.

The fleeing monk continues moving at an incredible pace, but at the same time at each tree he passes he grabs at a branch here or there, pulling at it for a beat as he passes, never stopping, never slowing so that his hunters might catch him.

Snow flies everywhere with each branch he pulls on or rushes by. Dramatic white flashes in the darkness.

-- Then finally his goal is clear, a branch he can pull free - as he runs, grabs, so one branch half-breaks away --

-- He wrenches it free with another dramatic spray of snow. He turns, weapon ready. The horseman rides at him, sword raised, swings at the monk --

-- The Monk, ducks the swing, leaps, swings the branch, knocks the horseman head-over heels off his mount.

The Monk leaps on the horse, is about to gallop away when -- an SWORD comes from pin-wheeling out of the darkness -- finds its target, nailing the monk in the back.

He falls, crawling, still trying to escape, inch by inch as the Horsemen arrive, dismount, calmly walk towards him.

The Monk crawls another inch then -- dies.

One of Horsemen emerges from the shadows. DULAC, 36, tall, hard faced, eyes dark, nose like a hawk. He Reaches for the

sword hilt, puts a foot on his victim's back for leverage, yanks the sword out.

DULAC

There. It's done.

INT. GEOFFREY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Geoffrey awakens, groans, rolls over, closes his eyes. A beat. Then. A cockerel crows. Geoffrey sighs, gets up, stretches. There is a sadness to his solitary life. He sits on the end of the bed, looks about, sees --

A lute, sitting on a stool. He picks it up, puts his fingers to the strings to strum and --

--One string snaps, stings his face/almost takes his eye out.

Geoffrey tosses the lute onto the bed and still with a sad air, looks out the window at - Nottingham in the morning, the rising sun cresting over snow-covered rooftops.

REVERSE ANGLE - looking at Geoffrey from the P.O.V. outside pulling back to reveal --

Geoffrey's chamber is above the Sheriff's office (little more than a two-story thatched cottage.) We pull back from this to show Nottingham City in all its glory in the year 1205.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MORNING

Geoffrey enters from upstairs, glances at the ex-Crusaders, still sleeping in a cell to one side of the large office.

The office, while basic, very much has the feel of a medieval "police station". Fireplace. A desk for Geoffrey, a smaller desk for Hugh, shelves with scrolls of record. Weapons and wanted posters on a wall. Hugh tends a pot in the fire.

HUGH

Broth?

GEOFFREY

You're early.

HUGH

Better here than home.

GEOFFREY

Argument?

HUGH

All I'll say is you're lucky not to be married.

Geoffrey looks off, a sad expression for a moment --

GEOFFREY

Let's get the day started.

Hugh peers through the horn shutters of the office door.

HUGH

Ooo. There's a crowd already.

GEOFFREY

Christmas spirit, it gets to folk like a lunacy.

(begins unlocking door)

Let the madness begin.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The place is amass with people waiting to speak to Geoffrey. Geoffrey stands, paces, listens somewhat restlessly. Hugh sits, transcribing what is said into a ledger. At this moment, Geoffrey stands with a bandaged man.

GEOFFREY

Are you getting all this, Hugh?

HUGH

Fast as my quill can dip, sheriff.

GEOFFREY

Richard Benyt beat Richard Clyde, did hamsoken upon him in his own home.

MOMENTS LATER -- Geoffrey interviews a skinny woman (30s).

GEOFFREY

(recognizes her)

Ah, Mrs. Trotter.

He holds up her purse, rescued from the Crusaders last night.

GEOFFREY

Your purse. Probably a bit lighter than when it was stolen, but enough still than I hope you can continue your pilgrimage.

TROTTER

What of the men who took it?

The ex-Crusaders are in a nearby cell looking on. All look the worse for the fight and drink consumed. Hal, nevertheless, decides to plead his case --

HAL

Hello my good lady, if you could just tell this idiot it was a simple misunderstanding --

Geoffrey has an idea, grabs a shield and a sword, smashes them together repeatedly. It's a cacophony -- the hung-over ex-Crusaders are in agony. Hal, retreats to his cot.

TROTTER

You're very cruel.

MOMENTS LATER -- Geoffrey speaks with MORRIS, a stout townsman. The townsman holds up a crude hammer, waving it.

MORRIS

This is a forgery.

GEOFFREY

And this is what, exactly?

MORRIS

It was purported to be the hammer of Jesus our savior from the time when he was but a simple carpenter.

GEOFFREY

And?

MORRIS

It's birch. The handle. A pilgrim not long returned from Jerusalem said there were no birch trees there.

GEOFFREY

(understanding)

Ahh.

MOMENTS LATER -- Geoffrey and GOBBY, an old hermit-like fellow, a little mad and clearly no stranger to the bottle.

GOBBY

I saw it, bright and bold as apples. Dragon fire it was, I know it. Dragons and mighty they are, abiding in the forest.

Geoffrey nods, interested, understanding -- as he leads Gobby back outside --

GEOFFREY

Thanks for the warning, Gobby, I'll look into it this very morning.

As Gobby leaves, Hugh looks on, questioning --

HUGH

Sheriff? Are we really to go a dragon hunting.

GEOFFREY

(shakes head)

Gobby means well. He meant well two years ago when he had half the town looking for a unicorn he saw in the forest. Turned out to be a stag with but one antler.

Hugh smiles, understands. He glances past Geoffrey outside, sees something that makes his smile drop --

ALDERMAN CROWLEY 40s, stout, smug, clad in the fine robes of his office. He passes the crowd, as if above them. His destination is Geoffrey's office, a moment from entering --

HUGH

Sheriff! Alderman Crowley - he --

Too late. As -- Crowley, 40s enters with a flourish. Hugh's expression switches in that moment to a strained smile.

HUGH

-- Graces us with his presence.

CROWLEY

(to Geoffrey)

Sheriff. A word.

GEOFFREY

Good morrow, Alderman.

CROWLEY

I want to know what you're doing about crime in Nottingham, Sheriff.

GEOFFREY

My job, as I have these ten years. In other words everything I can.

CROWLEY

In other words not nearly enough.

Geoffrey glares at Crowley, bids him to venture outside.
They enter into the Nottingham day, a hive of activity.

CROWLEY

Nottingham abounds with cut-purses,
brigands and doxies.

GEOFFREY

Whom I deal with.

(beat)

The fact is Nottingham is the major
city for the relics trade. It has been
since the Crusades and it's made this
city money. Indeed, it's Nottingham's
main source of income. Hence, you're
not here urging me to ban it.

CROWLEY

(momentarily flustered)

That's not your -- What of it?

GEOFFREY

Where there's money -- the kind of
money these relics, real and not so
real can bring -- crime follows on,
as sure as day follows night.

CROWLEY

Yes, well that all has to stop while the
Virgin Mary visits Nottingham.

GEOFFREY

She visits us? I didn't realize she
was up and about.

CROWLEY

Your words border on blasphemy, sir.

(beat)

Her bones. The relic of the virgin's
bones is to be a gift to King John.

GEOFFREY

I'm sure he trembles with anticipation.

CROWLEY

Bishop Harrick, the King's own
authority on Holy relics, was at
Liverpool Harbor to meet the ship
that brought it from Jerusalem. He
accompanies it to London and the

(MORE)

CROWLEY (cont'd)
procession is passing through
Nottingham in two days.

(beat)

That he would come so far out of his
way to honor this town -- I'll not have
it besmirched by criminal acts. Do
your job. Keep the villains contained
to Sherwood Forest where they belong
and our streets for the good people.

The two men glare at each other, tense for a moment then --

BOY 1
Sheriff! Sheriff!

BOY 2
We've found a body.

EXT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

The barber's pole outside is wrapped in bloody bandages. A
symbol then of the shop being for hair cutting AND surgery.

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

Geoffrey, Hugh stand over/examine the monk's body on a table.
The Barber/surgeon MILES 35, a scruffy fellow, blissfully
ignorant of the perils of bacteria, stands with them. Miles
gnaws on a mutton leg.

MILES
Least it's a clean wound, eh Geoff.
Better'n that one last week the
dogs got to.

GEOFFREY
Thanks for reminding me.

Geoffrey examines the monk's face covered in a thick beard.

GEOFFREY
Hmmm.

HUGH
What?

GEOFFREY
Something -- I'm not sure.

HUGH
Monk. Pilgrim.

GEOFFREY

Coming to or from the Holy Land.
Canterbury perhaps.
(to Miles)
Let's examine his wounds.

They pull at the monk's robes and see -- tattoos of Latin text and religious iconography cover his entire torso --

HUGH

What are these?

GEOFFREY

It's something they do in the Holy Land. I've seen moors marked thus. Then it became something of a fashion -- among crusaders.

MILES

He's a crusader? Oh. I'll dump him back in the woods then shall I?

GEOFFREY

Hold on, he's still been murdered.

MILES

But he's rubbish. Better still if he'd died in the Holy Land.

GEOFFREY

Miles. Miles. I know you have at least a fart's worth of Christian charity within you.

Miles promptly farts.

MILES

Whoops. Not anymore.

GEOFFREY

Seriously. These ex-crusaders - are men whose purpose ebbed to naught with the passing of King Richard and end of the crusades. Some became villains, true. Some became vagrants. But all remain Englishmen, who at one time served their king.

HUGH

And this one, at least, found God.

GEOFFREY

Perhaps.

(looks, sees --)

His fingers are brown. Stained with --

Miles casually licks the corpse's fingertips (appalls Hugh) --

MILES

Resin.

GEOFFREY

Used in the aging of forged relics --
stains metal to seem like gold.

Perhaps our friend wasn't Holy at all.

(looks at corpse's face)

Something about his face -- get the
shears, Miles, let's see him fully.

MOMENTS LATER -- they stand over the clean-shaven corpse --

HUGH

Recognize him now?

GEOFFREY

Indeed I do. It's Will Scarlet.

As Geoffrey reveals this, so CAMERA tracks past them to -- a half open rear window, where the two boys who found the body watch/listen. They race away with this gem of info --

EXT. NOTTINGHAM STREET -- DAY

Geoffrey and Hugh walk the street, so at home they negotiate piss-puddles, pigs, pick-pockets and the sundry other perils to health and hygiene with humorously relaxed dexterity.

HUGH

What steps should we take?

GEOFFREY

Will Scarlet was Robin Hood's right-
hand man. Liked by all. I confess
even I thought him the least
troublesome of the bunch.

Intercut with: The two boys spread the news, word of mouth grows with each vignette. The boys tell the blacksmith who tells a vendor who tells the rat-catcher who tells a tavern wench who tells an arrow fletcher who tells a goat herder and on and on, the word on the street growing moment by moment by moment as --

Geoffrey and Hugh continue their walk/talk oblivious --

GEOFFREY

Hugh - we have one thing to our advantage. No one knows he's dead. This investigation will go the smoother I think the less people expect our questions. Relic dealers, forgers and the like are a wary bunch around us on a good day. Not to mention Robin's old gang scattered about the town.

HUGH

You're saying --

GEOFFREY

I'm saying they'll likely be a bit more open if they don't know the purpose of our inquiries.

HUGH

I see.

GEOFFREY

So it's agreed. No one shall know.

TOWNSWOMAN

Sheriff, sheriff. Have you found Will Scarlet's killer yet?

Geoffrey turns to Hugh, frustrated. Hugh has had a thought --

HUGH

I wonder what Robin Hood will say when he finds out.

GEOFFREY

If he ever shows his face around here again? Which I doubt.

(beat/thinks)

I'm sure he'd have plenty to say.

EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Two floors. Thatched roof. The place is nestled in woodland on a country road. Far from town, far from Nottingham.

VOICE

(from inside tavern)

And now, for your edification and delight --

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

-- Crammed with drinkers transfixed by the speaker --

-- ROBIN HOOD, 30s. Handsome, charming, although not quite what you might expect. He looks a little gone-to-seed, clothing a little shabby, belly slightly round, the signs of a life misspent around his face/eyes. He wears leather gloves, gesturing wildly as he continue his recollection --

ROBIN HOOD

-- Allow me to regale you with --

(clears throat)

"Robin Hood..." --

(gestures to himself)

-- Being yours truly. "Robin Hood
and the Great Adventure of Lady
Blaine's Diamond."

As Robin continues, so he makes eye-contact with a beautiful young girl in the crowd, whose name we'll learn is DAPHNE, 17. She smiles at him alluringly, Robin not failing to notice this even as he continues his tale.

ROBIN HOOD

It all began on a crisp bright day in
June. Sherwood Forest was as green
as my tunic --

As we focus on his belly, patched tunic, flaws and signs of a misspent decade -- Robin is oblivious, smiles --

ROBIN HOOD

And I'd just outsmarted the Sheriff
of Nottingham --

(beat/leans into crowd)

-- Yet again.

(crowd roars applause)

So there I was counting my newly
stolen riches before giving them to
the poor and needy.

The crowd cheers. Robin winks at Daphne.

INT. TAVERN STAIRCASE (GOING UPSTAIRS) - NIGHT

Robin and the girl, holding each other, taking moments to kiss, make their way ungracefully upwards. Robin is all drunken "playboy" swagger --

ROBIN HOOD

You know you're a lucky girl, Dorothy.

GIRL

Daphne.

ROBIN HOOD

Quite. Quite. Well I promise you --
this will be a night to remember.

They enter a second-floor room and immediately -- TWO ROBBERS
are upon him, knives to his throat and belly.

INT. DAPHNE'S ROOM - NIGHT/MOMENTS LATER

While one robber (CHARLIE) holds his knife to Robin's throat,
the other (DRAKE) goes through Robin's clothes for hidden
riches. Daphne looks on encouraging her cohorts --

ROBIN HOOD

What? What? Do you know who I am?

DRAKE

Ask us if we care.

ROBIN HOOD

Come now, surely there's some --
agreement -- arrangement -- a -- a
(thinks of a better word --)
-- Accord we could arrive at.

DRAKE

There is. Your money in our pockets.
(finds nothing)
Where's your coin?

ROBIN HOOD

Alas the cards weren't kind to me
earlier today.
(to Daphne)
For shame, Daisy, I thought you cared.

DAPHNE

Daphne! And you're old enough to be
my father.
(to Robbers)
Get his necklace.

ROBIN HOOD

That was given to me by King
Richard himself.

DAPHNE

And now he's given it to us.

ROBIN HOOD

The indignity. I'm Robin Hood.

DAPHNE

You're a lot of hot air and tall tales.

ROBIN HOOD

Every word I said was true.

DRAKE

Truth is we're too young to remember.

ROBIN HOOD

(offended)

But I'm the Prince of Thieves. We could be a team, if you but knew better. Let me show you the way.

Robbers/Daphne pause, intrigued. Robin knows he has them --

ROBIN HOOD

Let me regale you how we used to do it. Petty cut-pursing in dark rooms is no way to go. Why once I robbed Guy of Gisborne on the open road -- took his horse, his gold, the lot -- left him naked, tied to a sign post. Now that, my lads, was thievery.

The Robbers realize they've been taught a valuable lesson --

EXT. ROAD SIDE/SIGN POST - NIGHT

Robin stands there naked, save for hat and gloves, tied to the sign post.

ROBIN HOOD

The indignity.

Then, out of the darkness, the CLUMP, CLUMP, CLUMP of horse hooves. Robin sensing an opportunity, adopts his brightest smile (tries several before he finds the appropriate one.) Out of the darkness comes a TRAVELLER, passes Robin --

TRAVELLER

Hey, are you Robin Hood?

ROBIN HOOD

That depends, does he owe you money?

TRAVELLER

No.

ROBIN HOOD

Do you owe him money?

TRAVELLER

Err, no again.

Robin sighs, "may as well let the cat out of the bag."

ROBIN HOOD

Yes, it's I. In the flesh.

TRAVELLER

Funny, bumping into you, me coming from Nottingham and the news and all.

ROBIN HOOD

And what, pray tell, is the news?
Good I hope.

TRAVELLER

I doubt you'll think so.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM STREET -- DAY

Where Ferret struts down the street, looks for gullible souls and pickable pockets. Then he sees turning a street corner --

Geoffrey and Hugh. Ferret spins on his heel and walks the other way -- too late. Geoffrey and Hugh come up behind him to either side, whisk him off to a side alley --

GEOFFREY

Ah, Ferret. How goes the day?

FERRET

Oh, you know, Sheriff. Busy this, busy that. Must dash.

Ferret moves to leave. Geoffrey slams him into a wall and begins rooting through Ferret's tunic, finds a gold locket.

FERRET

My mother's. I swear it.

GEOFFREY

I don't believe you had a mother, Ferret, I think some pagan God of petty thievery shat you into life.

FERRET

Please don't lock me up again. I
can't stand the walls. So close.

GEOFFREY

Relax, my darling. You'll be spared the
cage this one time. I need information.
What do you know about Will Scarlet?

FERRET

I know he's dead.

GEOFFREY

Indeed. Then what word have you of his
enemies - or even his friends whose
smiles might belie treachery.

FERRET

He worked with a moor. That's who
I'd visit.

GEOFFREY

And where does this moor abide?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Geoffrey and Hugh ride --

GEOFFREY

This is your first time in the
forest?

HUGH

Aye. But I imagine it much like
any other?

As SHERWOOD FOREST looms --

GEOFFREY

Here we are. Decide for yourself.

They enter and leave the sun behind. The trees are
immediately ominous. The sounds, cracks, rustles and whispers
are also laden with menace. This is a dark, evil place so
very unlike the bright green haven of Robin Hood's legend.

GEOFFREY

What's wrong?

HUGH

(nervous)

Nothing.

GEOFFREY

I don't blame you for being jumpy.
The law has no sway here -- not now
nor back when Robin Hood and I
crossed swords. This was his world
that I entered at my peril.

HUGH

Brings back a lot of memories?

GEOFFREY

Yes. And none of them good.

Hugh is clearly unsettled. Geoffrey, while calmer is very
much on guard for attack from any side --

EXT. SHERWOOD SHANTY TOWN - DAY

A lawless "town" within the forest. A maze of shacks and
tents, housing all the undesirables of the area. Killers,
whores and worse. The place has the reek of evil and decay.

HUGH

My God, this place. It's --

GEOFFREY

As I said. Totally lawless --
thanks to Robin Hood. King Richard
had this proclaimed free land at
Robin's behest. Hence, every piece
of vermin on two legs fled here.

Geoffrey and Hugh glance at an alley where one man casually
slits the throat of another. Hugh is agog.

GEOFFREY

And you and I -- have not the power
of a butterfly.

INT. LUTHER THE MOOR'S DWELLING - DAY

A shack full of half-made relics as well as tools and
chemicals. The place is a pig-sty, with clutter everywhere.
A bed, heaped with clothes and more clutter is in one corner.

Geoffrey and Hugh enter, looking through things gingerly.

GEOFFREY

Well this is clearly the abode of a
relic forger.

HUGH

Yes, and a very tidy one he is too.

Geoffrey examines the work bench, sees a leather valise, opens it. They examine the contents of the valise --

-- A sketch of a relic arc (container) and a paper with bizarre characters (Chinese writing) daubed on it.

GEOFFREY

(re: sketch)

Recognize this?

HUGH

No.

GEOFFREY

Neither do I. It's a relic arc from the look of it. Is it real or a forgery I wonder. And if it a forgery was it already made or awaiting construction?

(re: paper/characters)

Does this mean anything to you?

HUGH

They're not English, nor French, nor anything from the lands of Europe I'd say. Arabic? He was a Moor.

GEOFFREY

I've seen enough to recognize Arabic words which these are not. Nor it is the writing of the Jews.
(examines work bench)
Go and check under the bed.

HUGH

Must I?

As Hugh walks to the bed, sees fleas hopping on the blankets.

HUGH

Fleas. Great. My wife will kill me if I bring any of these home.

GEOFFREY

Just be careful none of them jump up.

As if hearing the word "jump" as a cue, Luther springs up from under the bed-clothes, dives out the window before Geoffrey or Hugh can react.

GEOFFREY

Luther!

Geoffrey grabs the valise, races outside, Hugh behind him --

-- Straight into a thieves' market. Luther is nimble, gliding past/around whores/peddlers with a dancer's grace. Geoffrey and Hugh have no such moves and must push/barge through amidst yells and curses.

Geoffrey is close behind the moor, gaining. He reaches out, a moment from grabbing him when --

-- A horse dealer/thief runs through the market with a dozen mares. Luther dives into the midst of them as they gallop past. Geoffrey follows into --

-- A deadly game of jump, dodge and dive this way and that to avoid the hooves and flanks of the massive equines.

Luther is visible one minute and lost the next within this ever moving world of "horses in motion". Then --

-- Out the other side. Geoffrey looks about, momentarily stunned. Hugh has been following along outside of the horses. He points --

HUGH

There!

Luther is racing down a alley. Geoffrey lunges after him, Hugh following on.

As Luther runs he calls out, a high-pitched yell/whistle signaling to those within this "thieves world".

People come to the windows of the alley, pelt Geoffrey and Hugh with food, slop, anything to hand.

A dog attacks Hugh, biting into his leg. Hugh kicks and flails, trying to dislodge the animal as he gamely continues running after Geoffrey.

At the other end, the alley opens out into a raised section of street looking down on a small dale that a brook flows through. A water-wheel is in the brook in the center of this dale, close to the raised area --

-- Close enough that Luther leaps for the water-wheel, his momentum/direction the same as the forward rotation of the water-wheel. In this way, by running on the top of the wheel for a few steps Luther is propelled high into the air and far on the other side of the square away from Geoffrey.

But not for long -- as Geoffrey too leaps for the wheel, runs on for a few steps and is launched into the air straight at Luther.

Luther turns, flees, as Geoffrey lands, grabs Luther for a moment before the moor kicks free, nails Geoffrey on the chin. They scramble up and continues the chase, as --

Hugh follows Geoffrey, takes a few steps on the wheel and -- because of the dog still clinging to him -- falls, wild-limbed into the mud of the brook-bank.

The dog flees. Hugh limps up after Geoffrey who --

-- Chases Luther down another lane.

Luther turns a corner. Geoffrey follows but a moment later and -- Luther has vanished. Like a ghost. Like he was never there at all. Geoffrey and a breathless Hugh look around --

GEOFFREY

How did he vanish like that?

Geoffrey looks, sees that others within the Shanty Town peer out from windows and doors. Hard eyes, expressions of menace.

HUGH

I think we should do the same,
Sheriff.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

Fresh snow falls lightly on the scene -- a simple coffin awaits lowering. A priest says words over it. People file by - indeed the whole of Nottingham is here to pay their respects. The mournful procession seems never-ending.

Geoffrey and Hugh stand further away from it all in the shadows of a low tree on a hill.

HUGH

Heavens, Sheriff, you look glummer
than I've ever seen you.
(under his breath)
If that's possible.

GEOFFREY

Three days and no sight nor sign nor
word of the moor. I should have him
by now. I'm better than this.

HUGH
(studies mourners)
Good turn out.

More people file by, young and old. Some place flowers on the coffin. Some place pennies and trinkets.

HUGH
The whole of Nottingham.

GEOFFREY
As I said, he was liked by all. He was certainly better than the company he kept. Even I had a grudging affection for him.

HUGH
You make Scarlet sound better than Robin Hood.

GEOFFREY
Robin! Ha! Steal from the rich and give to the poor - my arse. Kept every penny. Will was no saint, but - he saw a staving man he'd spare a crown.

GEOFFREY
(re: mourners)
And they know that. He had a good laugh too, full of life.
(beat)
I sometimes wonder what it would be like to have such a laugh.

Geoffrey realizes he's revealing too much of himself to his deputy. He stiffens.

A group of men advancing in a line to pay respects --

GEOFFREY
Ahh, here they are. The Merry Men.

The first is a squat middle-aged man, looking more local business man than wild outlaw --

HUGH
Why that's Much Doolittle, head of the Miller's Guild.

GEOFFREY
Aye, like father like son, Much the Miller's Son they called him back then.

The next is a giant of a man, although even from afar we can see his gentle eyes and countenance --

GEOFFREY
The big fellow you can guess.

HUGH
Little John.

The next is a handsome fellow, perhaps a little too styled.

GEOFFREY
Alan-a-Dale.

The next is a hearty man, red faced.

GEOFFREY
John-a-Green.

A tall, hawk-like man in his 50s is the last.

GEOFFREY
And Gilbert Whitehand.

HUGH
All familiar faces for you, I bet.

GEOFFREY
Yes --

After a few more mourners, a woman (MAID MARIAN) is next. She's late 20s, beautiful. She wears a red cloak, bright in the snow and the dark attire of the other attendees.

Geoffrey looks, seemingly transfixed by her. Sad.

She places a rose on Will's coffin, whispers a farewell then as she turns to leave, pauses, looks -- right into Geoffrey's eyes. Geoffrey breaks their gaze, angry --

GEOFFREY
-- Familiar faces.

More mourners. More Nottingham. Sheriff watches each in turn then -- jerks to attention. He can sense in the air --

GEOFFREY
Robin Hood is here.

HUGH
How do you know?

GEOFFREY

Oh I know.

As if on cue the crowd parts as if admitting Christ to the assembly -- Robin Hood, solemnly touches the hands of this passerby or that. (We should note he now wears the clothes of the traveller he met at the sign post.)

He arrives at Will's coffin, bows, places his forehead on it with a flourish, whispering a few tender words (the crowd assumes) before rising and turning to the crowd -- ever the showman. He begins his speech like he's taking the stage --

ROBIN HOOD

Dearest brother, my dear, dear Will.
I mourn your passing, true. But I
doubly mourn these good people of
Nottingham and myself, your humble,
lowly squire in arms. For we shall
never again bask in the sun of your
smile nor hear the melody of your
laughter. You made the world a
better place, Will Scarlet -- a
happier, brighter place. And we are
the less for your passing.

He bows his head, his moment done. Applause.

GEOFFREY

What a sack of horse manure.

HUGH

(eyes moist)

There are women crying.

GEOFFREY

How does he do it?

HUGH

Men too. Adam the blacksmith is
sobbing into his apron.

(glances off)

I must say though --

(gestures towards --)

The Merry Men don't look very merry.
I mean I know it's a funeral for Will
Scarlet and all -- sadness --

We see the Merry Men. They glare at Robin, none of them
moved or thrilled or happy to see him --

HUGH

-- But they all look angry.

EXT. THE TRIP TO JERUSALEM - NIGHT

As Will's wake begins --

ROBIN HOOD

So there was one sword between the
pair of us, and Will -- being Will --
-- he yells, "let's play some catch"
-- back and forth we tossed the
sword, he'd kill one and then I
another and --

As the crowd roars with delight -- Alan-a-Dale looks on
glumly from the far end of the tavern. Geoffrey ambles over.

ALAN-A-DALE

That was me.

GEOFFREY

What?

ALAN-A-DALE

Will and me. We did that. One
sword between two of us.

(nods at Robin)

He was busy shooting arrows and
running around being "Robin".

(beat)

I suppose I'm to blame. In a way.
If my ballads of old hadn't been so
fine, folk might not believe the
spew he spouts in the here and now.

GEOFFREY

I need to talk with you. All of you.

Alan doesn't look over, rather stares ahead hating Robin.

ALAN-A-DALE

I'll see it done.

GEOFFREY

(surveys crowd)

Though I notice one of you has yet to
grace us with his presence -- which
surprises me with food and ale so
readily at hand. Friar Tuck.

ALAN-A-DALE

Tuck vanished. A good while ago. He
liked to travel, study foreign lands,
foreign tongues. Foreign drinks.

(MORE)

ALAN-A-DALE (cont'd)
(long beat/ thinks, then -)
By the by Sheriff, do you still
wear my scar?

GEOFFREY
Oh I think over the years I
collected one from each of you.
(walks off)
I'll be in the back chamber.

INT. TAVERN PRIVATE CHAMBER - DAY

The Sheriff sits on one side of a table with interviewees to sit on the other. (As a result, despite its olden trappings the place has the feel of a police interview room.)

Little John is the first to sit there, faces Geoffrey --

LITTLE JOHN
I knew Will was involved in relics.
I won't lie.

GEOFFREY
And you wanted nothing to do with
it, I suppose.

LITTLE JOHN
Not since Robin and I parted ways.

GEOFFREY
Robin, your friend.

LITTLE JOHN
No. Robin was not a true friend.
I - we would have died for him - in
fact a couple of us did. Then, for
the sake of gold or some treasure
or other he deserted us.

GEOFFREY
So you hate Robin. Fine. That's
not to say you hate gold if Will
came to you with a scheme.

LITTLE JOHN
I've a family now. Have you met my
wife? Five feet one inches of unbridled
fury. She'd kill me if she thought I
was up to anything. But Will --

MOMENTS LATER -- Gilbert Whitehand now sits in John's place.

GILBERT WHITEHAND

-- Firstly he joined the Crusades.
After Robin made off with the
reward King Richard had given to
all of us. Perhaps he thought he'd
find Saracen gold in Jerusalem.
Perhaps he believed in Richard's
cause. Whatever of it --

MOMENTS LATER -- Alan-a-Dale is now the interviewee.

ALAN-A-DALE

-- Will returned home changed. I
wanted to regroup the Merry Men,
start up again Robin or not. But I
needed Will to do it and his light
had faded. He saw things over
there I suppose. Horrible things,
we've all heard the tales. Will
had to eat though --

MOMENTS LATER -- John-A-Green now sits in Alan's place.

JOHN-A-GREEN

-- And for all he'd seen in the Holy
Land he'd also learned of relics.

GEOFFREY

So he became a forger.

JOHN-A-GREEN

He and a fellow named Luther.

GEOFFREY

Yes, I -- know of him. You think
him likely Will's killer?

JOHN-A-GREEN

I'm a farmer now, what do I know?
(beat/off G's silence)
Word is his partners have a habit
of turning up dead when it's time
to divide the spoils.

GEOFFREY

So when did you last see Will?

MOMENTS LATER -- Much the Miller's Son replaces John-A-Green.

MUCH

He came to my cottage. Late one
night it was. He wanted to know
where Robin Hood abided these days.

GEOFFREY

Robin.

MUCH

Something troubled Will, he sought
advice - aid.

GEOFFREY

What was it lay heavy upon him?

MUCH

It was for Robin's ears only. They
had a bond.

Geoffrey sighs, dreading/loathing the thought of the
inevitable next interviewee.

MOMENTS LATER AND the interview seat is empty. A beat. Then --

Robin enters with a flourish. Geoffrey looks at him with a
mixture of hatred and tired disgust. He nods to the chair --

-- Which Robin dusts off with a few swipes of his
handkerchief before sitting - he settles then --

ROBIN HOOD

Well here we are. Though I wish my
Sheriff Geoffrey it was under
better circumstances.

GEOFFREY

I wish we didn't have to meet at
all. But as you say, here we are.

ROBIN HOOD

You haven't changed, have you --
still heavy-laden with all that
ails humanity.

GEOFFREY

Well that is a lot of ailing.
While I imagine you've been
frolicking among the buttercups.

ROBIN HOOD

The years have been kinder to me at
least.

GEOFFREY

Yes, I'm sure you think so.
(beat/gets to business)
And where were you all the while
Will Scarlet sought your aid?

ROBIN HOOD

What business is it of yours?

GEOFFREY

A man has died. Murdered. Your
"brother". My business.

ROBIN HOOD

I was in Shrewsbury -- or it might
have been Ipswich.

(sighs)

Look, word of an old colleague
seeking me, usually means a demand
for coin owed them.

GEOFFREY

So you avoided Scarlet's request to
find you. And he may have died
because of it.

ROBIN HOOD

Oh come now. Silly talk.

GEOFFREY

(contempt)

You sir, are as spineless and
selfish as the first day I saw you
draw bow.

(thinks then --)

Where is your bow -- your arrows?

Robin smiles with the first hint of sadness. He leaves.

MOMENTS LATER -- And Geoffrey sits alone with his thoughts
when -- a TAP on the door -- Maid Marian enters.

MARIAN

Hello Geoffrey.

Geoffrey's eyes widen with emotion, surprised. Then,
recalling the past his face hardens. Silence.

MARIAN

I said --

GEOFFREY

I heard what you said, Marian. I
heard you.

MARIAN

I must say after all this time you look --

GEOFFREY

I've been told. Heavy-laden. What do you want?

MARIAN

Your interviews. I thought you might have a question or two for me.

GEOFFREY

Although you are as fair as the day that I first chanced upon you -- the sight of you still sickens my heart. Please, bother me not.

Marian opens her mouth to reply, but thinks better of it. She turns, sadly, then thinks better of it too --

MARIAN

No. I won't leave. Will was a friend of mine too. Once.

GEOFFREY

(calls out)

Hugh!

Hugh enters.

GEOFFREY

Please escort this woman out. Inform her that her services are not required.

MARIAN

And - Hugh is it? - inform the Sheriff he's a bull-headed, slop-headed --
(at a loss for words)
Tell him he's beneath my contempt.

Marian sees a gold locket she wears has slipped out from inside her dress. She puts it back, straightens herself then -
- she storms out. Geoffrey rises, sad, shaken.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

As Geoffrey emerges to the sound of cheers. He looks sees Robin is as usual, the center of attention -- Geoffrey skirts the crowd, nevertheless catches Robin's eye --

ROBIN HOOD

Sheriff! I was just making an announcement. No. A proclamation.

GEOFFREY

Oh good.

ROBIN HOOD

Will Scarlet's killer will be caught.
The right man for the job is on the
job and justice shall be done.

GEOFFREY

(suspicious)

I'm too long in the tooth not to
doubt your compliment.

ROBIN HOOD

Compliment you? No. I wasn't. I
didn't. I meant me. I will find
Will's murderer.

Cheers all around.

GEOFFREY

You couldn't find ale in a tap
house, you ham-bone.

ROBIN HOOD

How dare you! I'm hero to the
nation and my talents are many.

GEOFFREY

Your one talent is aiming a bow.
Apart from that -- and as for
England's love from the look of you
I'd say a large part of the
population has forgotten --
(realizes)

So that's it. Find Will's killer,
steal another moment of glory.

ROBIN HOOD

I resent the implication that I would
sell the memory of my friend for --

GEOFFREY

You'd sell the coins off your dead
mother's eyes. Leave this to the
professionals.

ROBIN HOOD

Meaning you? A man I confounded at
every turn.

GEOFFREY

I was young then and --

Geoffrey catches sight of Marian in the crowd. She looks at one or both men scornfully --

GEOFFREY
-- Distracted.
(remains cool)
Cross me, you see my jail cell and
that's a promise.

Geoffrey leaves calmly. Hugh follows.

GEOFFREY
(over shoulder --)
Besides, good luck finding Luther
the Moor.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM STREET -- DAY/MINUTES LATER

Geoffrey and Hugh walk, the former still clearly agitated --

HUGH
You hate him, don't you.

GEOFFREY
No. I hate the laughter. Nottingham's
townsfolk, they laugh at me for what?
My job? For doing the right thing?
(anger grows)
"I steal from the rich and give to
the poor." Bollocks. He kept every
penny and florin and shilling he
stole. Robin of Locksley. Sir Robin.
Landed gentry turned benevolent
outlaw. Bollocks. There isn't even
such a place as Locksley. Oh I
looked into it, believe me. He made
it up. He's no more gentry than I am.
He's no better than I am. He's --
(beat/calms/smiles wryly)
I guess I do hate him at that. Still
he was never that smart. He'll have no
more success finding Luther than me.

As an EXCITED breathless BOY runs up --

EXCITED BOY
Sheriff! Sheriff!

GEOFFREY
What is it?

EXCITED BOY

Robin Hood found the Moor. They're fighting three streets over.

GEOFFREY

We've not left him but a few moments ago. How in Heaven did he--
(beat/starts to run)
Come on.

EXT. STREET COURTYARD - DAY

As Geoffrey and Hugh rush in and see - Robin and Luther hard at combat - swords. Townsfolk watch breathlessly.

For a moment it seems like the fighters are easily matched. But with each lunge and parry it becomes apparent that Robin is hopelessly out of his depth -- even if he wasn't drunk.

Robin takes a fencer's pose, then burps. He sees a pretty girl looking on, smiles at her in a bleary, drunken way.

Luther sends Robin backward with a volley of lunges. Robin counters, charges. Luther darts to one side, sticks out his foot, effortlessly trips Robin up, sends him sprawling.

Robin loses his sword in the fall, crawls in the dirt. Luther stands facing Robin still on all fours.

Luther smiles, raises his sword for the killing stroke when --

-- Robin lunges forward and sinks his teeth in Luther's groin. The moor screams, as Robin pulls a knife from his sleeve, sticks it between Luther's ribs. The moor falls dead.

Robin struts over to Geoffrey, proud of his victory --

ROBIN HOOD

There! Not the most graceful of victories, but a win none the less.

GEOFFREY

You drunken fool, what have you done?

ROBIN HOOD

(playing to the crowd)
Avenged the death of Will Scarlet.

Cheers from everyone -- except Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY

You killed the one man who might
have given us answers.

ROBIN HOOD

The sheriff is jealous.

Boos.

GEOFFREY

(to the crowd)

One more murmur, I'll arrest the
lot of you for illegal assembly.

MURMUR AT BACK OF CROWD

Bastard.

GEOFFREY

(back to Robin)

Now. Luther the Moor was --

ROBIN HOOD

Will's killer. Everyone said so.

GEOFFREY

I didn't. Not for sure. Now we'll
never know.

ROBIN HOOD

You're just riled because I found him
in moments when you couldn't in days.

GEOFFREY

You haven't heard a thing I've
said, have you.

(beat)

Well I remember something I said to
you -- something I promised --

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Robin on one side of the jail bars, Geoffrey on the other --

ROBIN HOOD

How dare you! I'm Robin Hood!

Geoffrey looks at him for a moment, his expression sad -- as
if all the memories of yore, the defeats and shame dance
before his eyes. He sighs from the pit of his soul then --

GEOFFREY

If anyone has a greater sense of
that than me, I've yet to meet him.
Now be quiet or it's a whipping.

ROBIN HOOD

Never! The people would riot.

GEOFFREY

I think you'd be surprised how
little out of their way people will
go for each other. Even you.

ROBIN HOOD

I'm their hero.

GEOFFREY

You're a thief.

ROBIN HOOD

You're jealous.

GEOFFREY

You're pathetic.

He turns/exits, leaving Robin alone.

ROBIN HOOD

The indignity.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM STREET -- DAY

As a solemn procession makes its way, people look on, cheer.

Geoffrey and Hugh, push through the crowd to the fore, taking
in everything. Crowley is nearby, sees Geoffrey, motions --

The procession is darkly impressive. To the fore TEN MONKS,
all ride gigantic black shire-horses. The monks, all giant
men, carry swords clearly as adept at combat as worship.

CROWLEY

Isn't it remarkable?

GEOFFREY

That's one word for it. I have to
say the priests or friars or
whatever they are look -- robust.

CROWLEY

God's Warriors.

GEOFFREY

That's what crusaders called themselves?

One more monk rides to the fore of them, holding a standard high depicting the emblem of the ORDER OF ST. ALBAN.

CROWLEY

They are -- ex-crusaders, all of them. The Order of St. Alban and they guard God's word with an iron hand I'm told.

Next in the process is a carriage where BISHOP HARRICK, 50 sits. Harrick is a kindly looking man, having a gentle smile, as he waves to the passing throng.

CROWLEY

Harrick's escort.

GEOFFREY

He wanted them.

CROWLEY

They insisted. It's the relic --

Following, a flat-bedded wagon on which, secured with silken ropes, is the RELIC OF THE VIRGIN MOTHER. It is in a large ark of burled wood, inlaid with gold and jewels.

CROWLEY

-- They guard that most Holy relic. And we are doubly honored.

GEOFFREY

Howso?

CROWLEY

Though Harrick and his warrior monks have watched it since it arrived at Liverpool Harbor, we are the first place they've passed through that's been allowed to see it.

GEOFFREY

Most generous.

CROWLEY

Look at its ark. Exquisite.

Ten more St. Albanians bring up the rear of the procession.

CROWLEY

Have you ever seen anything like it?

Geoffrey and Hugh both know that they just have -- as Geoffrey pulls Luther's sketch from the valise and they compare it to the ark. It's an exact representation.

INT. NOTTINGHAM CATHEDRAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Open on one side to a courtyard, Geoffrey strides along, determined. Crowley follows, working hard to keep up --

CROWLEY

I must say this is all rather obvious.

GEOFFREY

Howso?

CROWLEY

You demand an audience with Harrick
- all of a sudden.

GEOFFREY

You don't have to be here.

CROWLEY

No, no, if you have the pleasure of
His Holiness' time, then so do I.

Geoffrey stops, looks Crowley in the face, then resumes striding onward.

GEOFFREY

As you wish.

They approach a door at the end of the corridor. As if on cue it opens -- Harrick stands before them.

HARRICK

My good men. What can I do for you?

GEOFFREY

I'm Sheriff Moncette, your Holiness.
I have questions about the relic.

HARRICK

Ahh. Many there are who have things
they need to know. I'm sure one of
my entourage could help you.

GEOFFREY

It concerns a murder, here in
Nottingham. I think your relic is
a part of it.

Harrick is stunned. Crowley almost withers with shock.

INT. HARRICK'S CHAMBER - DAY

Harrick sits at a table, Luther's drawing of the Holy relic in front of him. Geoffrey and Crowley stand.

HARRICK

So you think the ark was a target
of forgers?

GEOFFREY

Evidence points in that direction.
(re: drawing)

Why would a forger have such a
scrupulous drawing of your relic if
not intending to profit from it?

HARRICK

You're certain that was their plan?

GEOFFREY

No, but I can think of no other.

HARRICK

Then I thank almighty God the Relic
has never left my guard. And now
with both men dead whatever their
plans were lie still-born.

GEOFFREY

Just to be positive - I'm a
thorough man and - I know
something of spotting fakes. Could
I see the ark?

HARRICK

(smiles)

The relic is safe and the relic is
real. And with both men dead I'd
say this business is done.

Harrick takes the drawing, folds it into his robe, then
smiles at Geoffrey --

HARRICK

I've heard of you, Sheriff.

GEOFFREY

(embarrassed)

Let me assure you, not everything
you've heard was true.

HARRICK

Oh, I hope it is. You have a long record of good, intelligent service to the King -- Kings. Richard and now good King James. We are, after all both of us servants -- you, the law, me the Lord.

(beat/smiles)

My point, I had abiding respect for you before I ever came to Nottingham.

Geoffrey is surprised, flattered. Crowley is appalled.

HARRICK

I will mention your diligence to the King upon my return to London. Of that you have my word.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM STREET (OUTSIDE SHERIFF'S OFFICE) - DAY

Geoffrey walks to the front door, is about to enter. He stops. An idea. He muses for a moment, sighs, realizing what must be done, and enters--

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Geoffrey throws his coat on the table, walks over to Robin in his cell, barely looking at Hugh as he says --

GEOFFREY

Go home, Hugh?

HUGH

Sheriff? It's but half the day gone.

GEOFFREY

See your children. Kiss your wife.

Hugh leaves. Geoffrey continues staring Robin in the face.

GEOFFREY

How would you like to get out of here?

ROBIN HOOD

This implies a bargain to be struck.

GEOFFREY

I need your skills.

ROBIN HOOD

I only have one according to you --
firing a bow. Where shall I aim?

GEOFFREY

I may have been overly harsh with
my words. You do have a few
talents -- thievery, sly cunning.

ROBIN HOOD

I was thinking more along the lines
of my wit and charm but whatever.

GEOFFREY

I need to get into a guarded place.
I need to inspect something.

Robin realizes he's in the bargaining seat, lounges back down
on his bunk, closes his eyes --

ROBIN HOOD

You know, you've gone to such great
lengths to make me comfortable
here. Do your own dark deeds.
(beat, beat then --)
Beg.

GEOFFREY

Never.

ROBIN HOOD

Beg and I'll do it.

GEOFFREY

You scoundrel! This is to do with
Will's murder and you're making
demands. You should be begging me
for the chance to fix the blunder
you made killing Luther in the
first place.

ROBIN HOOD

I'll take that as you saying
"please" shall I?

Geoffrey unlocks the cell. Robin stands, waits to emerge --

EXT. NOTTINGHAM STREET (NEAR NOTTINGHAM CATHEDRAL) -- NIGHT

The lanes and alley ways surrounding the cathedral are dark,
still. For a beat. Then --

A St. Albanian appears on guard. He passes. A beat. Then another St. Albanian guard appears, passes. A beat. Then --
-- Geoffrey and Robin emerge from the shadows. They hunch together, whisper, wary of being noticed --

ROBIN HOOD

This way.

GEOFFREY

No. It's this way. I haven't shown you where yet.

(pushes Robin onwards)

Come on.

(a few steps later)

And you'd better have a plan for getting into the place when we get there.

ROBIN HOOD

A plan? Indeed. It's ingenious.

INT. CATHEDRAL LIBRARY (WHERE RELIC IS STORED) - NIGHT

A solemn place originally for study, it's been turned over to the relic for now. The ark sits upon a small table. Surrounded by candles, it has a solemn majesty. Quiet and still. Then --

Soot shoots out from the chimney. The sound of clambering then -- Geoffrey and Robin emerge from the chimney, covered in soot, trying not to cough (they speak in whispers.)

GEOFFREY

I have to say, I was expecting something a trifle more elaborate than climbing down the chimney.

ROBIN HOOD

We're here aren't we?

GEOFFREY

I'm filthy.

ROBIN HOOD

I repeat, you're in. Now. Where's this relic you fancy?

Geoffrey stands before it --

GEOFFREY

I'm probably crazy for doing this -- after Harrick's assurances -- but I

(MORE)

GEOFFREY (cont'd)
had to be sure.
(leans in/examines)
The work's good. But fake.

ROBIN HOOD
No. The work's excellent but fake.

GEOFFREY
Let's look inside.

ROBIN HOOD
Let me, you're hands are dirty,
you'll make a mess.

Robin reaches for the clasp, turns it -- not realizing the whole front of the ark will fall away --

-- Loudly. The weight from the front of the ark falling causes a table leg to give way. The table sags, the contents of the ark -- old, old BONES and BLACK SAND -- spills out at Geoffrey and Robin's feet, even as the men use their hands to contain the contents from tumbling out. (All in but a few brief seconds.)

A moment more then -- the entire ark slides off the table, hitting the floor with an even louder bang.

The two men look at the mess and each other agog at what they've done. Robin looks down -- he/we see that he holds the skull from the relic in his hands. He splutters with nervous laughter then --

Doors are thrown open. Two St. Alban Monks run in, swords ready. The monks are shocked by the ghastly scene --

ST. ALBAN "MONK"
Ye Gods!

GEOFFREY
(to Robin)
I don't suppose you have a plan now?

-- More St. Albanians rush in, weapons drawn, surround them.

ROBIN HOOD
Err, no.

A man pushes through the other St. Albanians. Even before we see his face, his body language exudes authority --

MAN
What manner of devilry is this?

ST. ALBAN "MONK"
Dulac! We found them like this!
It's terrible.

We see the man's face. It's Dulac, Will Scarlet's killer.

DULAC
(glares)
Terrible indeed.

ROBIN HOOD
(points at Geoffrey)
He did it! It was all him. He
made me come along.

GEOFFREY
Vile rogue! I should --

Dulac backhand slaps Geoffrey hard across the face --

DULAC
Silence!

ROBIN HOOD
Kick him too. Let me kick him for you.

Robin moves as if to - Geoffrey glares ready to fight Robin back. The Monks don't know what to make of these men hating each other even as they share the same fate -- then --

Harrick appears --

HARRICK
What is the meaning of this?

GEOFFREY
I'd like to ask you the same thing,
your Holiness. This relic is clearly --

HARRICK
I think the time for questions is
past, don't you -- heretic.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM STREET -- DAY

Geoffrey and Robin are bound together, in a cart on the way to their burning. The cart, pulled by a donkey, is guarded by St. Albanians who march along. Dulac leads the way.

The crowd watches on either side of the street. Their faces are stoney, as if in shock. Their initial reaction vague.

At the end of the street in a town square is a giant 10ft high x 30ft wide piling of wood/kindling with two stakes sticking up (presumably for Geoffrey and Robin.)

ROBIN HOOD

Our problems are solved.

GEOFFREY

If you mean life as an ongoing problem -- I quite agree.

ROBIN HOOD

The people. Nottingham, my berg.
They won't allow this.

GEOFFREY

Why not? Hasn't been a burning in a long time. Cold day. Perfect for it.

ROBIN HOOD

They won't let me burn, they love me.

A horse turd hits Robin. Robin staggers a little, looks at -- an old woman who glares back, snarls --

OLD WOMAN

Vile one.

GEOFFREY

Oh they love you.

ROBIN HOOD

She was aiming at you.

But the old lady appears to have started something --

More missiles start being thrown -- a few at first, then more and more, the crowd really starts to get into it. Turds, rotten food, dead rats, whatever they can get their hands on. All the while, the people scream "*heretic, burn them, etc.*"

INT. TOP OF THE PYRE - DAY

Geoffrey and Robin are tied to their stakes. Dulac does the last securing himself (around them are deafening yells/cries for blood from the crowd, as well as cracks/groan/creaks of the pyre itself as it strains under its own massive weight. Geoffrey sees his possessions/his lute among the debris.

GEOFFREY

All my worldly good? Charming.

DULAC

Waste not, want not.

GEOFFREY

Harrick was quick to arrange this.

DULAC

No less than you deserve.

GEOFFREY

Or I know too much. The relic's
fake and he knows it.

(looks Dulac in the eye)

And so do you.

DULAC

I'll enjoy seeing you die.

(beat/smiles)

Maybe even more than I enjoyed
killing Will Scarlet.

Dulac exits smiling. Geoffrey and Robin are stunned then --

ROBIN HOOD

(yells to people)

Did you hear him?! He killed Will
Scarlet!

But the crowd's cheers drown him out as -- the kindling is
lit. Fire spreads quickly. Pockets of flames, rising,
appearing quickly here/there among the kindling. Moving
through/up the kindling quickly towards Geoffrey and Robin --

ROBIN HOOD

(still yelling)

From his own lips. He's the one!

No use. The cheers and crackling fire is too loud.

GEOFFREY

You're wasting your breath, no one
can hear. Truth is, I doubt
they're even listening.

Smoke gets thicker, darker. The men cough --

ROBIN HOOD

Oh God, is this the end. I always
expected something...grander.
Certainly something later in life.
I'm too young. I'm too young.

Within moments the smoke obscures them from the crowd and they are in a black world all of their own. The red of the flame threatens to take the blackness and everything else away as it gets nearer and nearer --

-- Yet all the while the two men are more intent on arguing.

ROBIN HOOD

What a wretched death. I blame you.

GEOFFREY

I'm not the one who decided to toss the virgin's bones all over the place.

ROBIN HOOD

Well I'm not the one who needed to see them so badly.

GEOFFREY

I'm not the one who killed Luther.

ROBIN HOOD

Well I'm not the one who --
(tries to think of
something -- can't --)
-- You cart-horse.

GEOFFREY

Pillock.

ROBIN HOOD

Pox-mark.

GEOFFREY

Leech.

ROBIN HOOD

Why if I had but one hand free I'd --

Pulls, has a hand free. Robin looks at it with surprise --

ROBIN HOOD

-- Oh. It appears I do.

He punches Geoffrey.

GEOFFREY

Was that necessary?
(shakes off punch)
How did you get free?

Robin holds up his hand, which for the first time in the film we see sans glove. Robin's first/second fingers are cut off.

ROBIN HOOD

My hand is not what it was. The
fingers of my glove are stuffed
with rag. Easier to slip free.

GEOFFREY

You can explain later. Get us out
of here.

ROBIN HOOD

Us? Oh we're a team again? Why
should I help you?

GEOFFREY

(disbelief/contempt)

You'd let me burn. Go on then, God
damn you.

ROBIN HOOD

(shakes head/sad smile)

True, I may not be as wonderful as
some think me, Sheriff, but neither
am I as bad as you regard me.

He starts to untie Geoffrey --

EXT. DOWN INSIDE THE KINDLING - DAY

Geoffrey and Robin crawl, step and pull themselves through
the warren-like obstacle-course that the kindling is --

Wood, branches, old furniture, all twisted and piled, each
inch to freedom is an ordeal with sudden bursts of fire
appearing from nowhere around all the while at the same time.

Robin gets entangled. Geoffrey helps free him, pulling
forward through a particularly narrow passage as -- fire
blazes where moments before Robin had been. Smoke is thick
about them. The men cough, gasp for air. Then --

GEOFFREY

There!

Light ahead. An opening through the kindling to salvation.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE (JUST OUTSIDE THE PYRE) - DAY/MOMENTS LATER

As Geoffrey and Robin crawl out to freedom --

The crowd there are aghast, backing away, fearful of the two
"heretics" -- calling all the while "they're escaping, over

here, the villains are getting away, etc" for St. Albanians on the other side of the pyre to run around and stop them.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PYRE -- DuLac and the St. Albanians are duly alerted, pushing through the crowd as best they can to get all the way round to where Geoffrey and Robin are --

But it's Hugh who gets to Geoffrey and Robin first, helps them stagger away half-blind from smoke --

The St. Albans Monks are near. Robin, eyes clear, sees their dilemma -- sees kindling, one piece seems to be holding up a huge section of it. He grabs on it, starts to pull --

ROBIN HOOD

Sheriff!

(re: Hugh)

Err -- little Sheriff!

Geoffrey sees what he's doing immediately. He and Hugh run over, help Robin pull on the foundation piece - as the St. Albanians get nearer -- Geoffrey and Robin pull and --

The foundation piece comes free. The crowd scatters. A wall of flaming debris crashes down, separating the St. Albans from Geoffrey, Robin and Hugh with a wall of flame and smoke.

They pause, catching their breath, safe for a moment as -- an arrow flies through the flame narrowly missing them --

ROBIN HOOD

Egads!

Another arrow an instant later -- coming straight for Geoffrey, his eyes go wide, seeing death on-coming when --

Hugh pushes him out of the way and -- he is hit by the arrow instead. He falls, dead. All of it so sudden, the blink of an eye. Geoffrey is stunned.

GEOFFREY

Hugh!

Geoffrey spins at the flames, which part for an instant, shows Hugh's killer -- DuLac puts another arrow to his bow.

Geoffrey stands, faces DuLac as the flames waft/obscure him. Robin grabs Geoffrey's arm, pulls him away --

ROBIN HOOD

Come on, we cannot tarry.

GEOFFREY

Where? Where can we go?

ROBIN HOOD

There is but one place.

The crowd, cowards to a man, watch them flee --

INT. (RELIC'S) ANTE CHAMBER - DAY

Harrick sits/thinks by the now roaring fire in the fire place. Over to the side of the room, St. Albanians reconstitute the relic/the arc. Harrick sees DuLac enter.

HARRICK

What?

DULAC

My thoughts exactly, what shall we do?

HARRICK

We have a plan. Abide by it.

DULAC

Robin and the Sheriff are out there.

HARRICK

Robin and the Sheriff are mortal enemies. Like two men in the Tower of Babel, I doubt they even speak the same language.

DULAC

As one who's seen foreign lands, I know that men find ways to communicate if they have to.

HARRICK

Worry not. I have an idea.

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST (ROBIN'S OLD CAMPSITE) - DAY

If this was once the glorious hideout of Robin and his Merry Men, those days are long gone. The tattered remnants of a few tents and camp fires remain but all and everything looks sad and tired and old.

Geoffrey sits on a tree stump, heart-broken, defeated. Robin on the other hand straightens his clothes/hair --

GEOFFREY

(under breath)

Oh Hugh. Hugh, Hugh, Hugh.

ROBIN HOOD

Well at least you're alive. Count your blessings.

(looks around)

Ah, and many's the blessing I counted in this place -- along with coins aplenty.

GEOFFREY

(still mourning)

Hugh.

ROBIN HOOD

(oblivious)

How does it feel to be here now, Sheriff? My old camp. Ha, no matter how you looked -- and look you did -- you never found us, did you?

Robin gestures to some torn fabric flapping from a tree --

ROBIN HOOD

Look, that was Friar Tuck's old tent.

GEOFFREY

Yes, I can see all the empty ale jugs.

(beat)

I don't believe you. We just found out who killed Will -- the same bastard who murdered Hugh -- and you're busy re-living old glory.

(looks around)

Not that it looks very glorious.

(looks Robin in the eye)

Everything is old, forlorn, forgotten.

ROBIN HOOD

Well glorious or not, get used to it. It's your life too now. Outlaw.

GEOFFREY

I have half a mind to crack your skull for that. I'm a man of the law -- a better man than you.

ROBIN HOOD

Well at least people love me. Mothers drag their children indoors when you walk by.

GEOFFREY

That's not true. And the Merry Men hate you.

(MORE)

GEOFFREY (cont'd)

(pause, sighs)

But the fact remains, I need your help.

ROBIN HOOD

Could you repeat that? I didn't quite hear you.

GEOFFREY

(half-hearted smile)

You heard me.

(beat/re: Robin's hand)

How did you lose your hand?

ROBIN HOOD

Valiantly. At the Battle of Calais fighting for England's glory. This is how the bastard French punished captured longbowmen. Shall I start at the beginning?

GEOFFREY

God no.

ROBIN HOOD

You're wrong you know. My Merry Men love me.

(Geoffrey looks skeptical)

In fact what a grand idea. Let's get the boys back together.

GEOFFREY

I don't know.

ROBIN HOOD

Sheriff, I said it once, I'll say it again -- the Merry Men adore me.

EXT. MUCH THE MILLER'S SON'S MILL - DAY

They stand in Much's doorway looking around fearful they'll be seen. Much blocks their way from entry --

MUCH

Not a chance, you treacherous pig!
Do you think after clawing my way
to some semblance of respectability
I'd let you drag me back down?

EXT. JOHN-A-GREEN'S FARM/OPEN FIELD - DAY

LS. Geoffrey and Robin flee from John-A-Green who chases them with a scythe.

EXT. GILBERT WHITEHAND'S COTTAGE - DAY

Gilbert Whitehand also blocks their entry --

GILBERT WHITEHAND
Of course I'll help --
(frowns)
When you pay me and the lads what
you owe us. You foul, lying turd.

Even Geoffrey winces at the insult. Robin presses on --

ROBIN HOOD
But this isn't about coin, it's
about Will's murder?

EXT. ALAN-A-DALE'S FARM - DAY

Alan is less hostile, but with the farm's remoteness it's
less vital they get inside. Robin, Alan and Geoffrey talk --

ALAN-A-DALE
Don't think it didn't occur to me but --

-- Gestures to a very pregnant young girl, feeding chickens.

ALAN-A-DALE
-- Look at her -- eight months. And
Will wasn't killed for no reason. He
was mixed up in relic forgery. You
might say he brought it on himself.

EXT. LITTLE JOHN'S TWO-STORY FARM

Where John is hostile. He stands in the door of his home,
seemingly on the verge of attacking Robin --

LITTLE JOHN
Devil take him too. And Devil take
you, you sneaky, vile bastard.

ROBIN HOOD
How could you talk to a friend so?

LITTLE JOHN
How could you treat a friend so. I
was your friend, wasn't I -- or was
that a stupid fancy on the part of
big, dumb Little John?

Little John pushes Robin away, towards Geoffrey who nimbly side-steps him, causing Robin to fall flat on his ass --

-- As a second-floor window is thrown open and John's wife throws the contents of a commode fully upon Robin --

ROBIN HOOD
Pray God she threw water.

GEOFFREY
My nose says otherwise.

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST (ROBIN'S OLD CAMPSITE) - DAY

Now it's Robin who sits dejectedly on the tree stump --

ROBIN HOOD
You knew they hated me.

-- As Geoffrey tries to make fire, blows on leaves as he rubs a stick against stone in the midst of it. Nothing doing.

GEOFFREY
Yes. And I told you. Several times.

ROBIN HOOD
(looks around camp)
You're right. The past is gone.
Forlorn. Forlorn!

GEOFFREY
Oh for Heaven's sake.

ROBIN HOOD
We've no one. No one!

Geoffrey rolls his eyes, continues fire making efforts to no avail. Then -- Robin has an idea, looks mischievously at him.

ROBIN HOOD
No, wait. There is someone.
Someone who hates you.

As Geoffrey stops to ponder Robin's words, Robin absently takes the stick, blows on the leaves, starts a fire in but a moment. As Geoffrey realizes Robin's meaning --

GEOFFREY
No. Not a chance. After all that happened. Not...a...chance!

INT. MAID MARIAN'S HOUSE - DAY

A large house. Marian sits at her loom, weaves. The fireplace aglow, warm and golden. Then -- knock at the door

She opens the door. Robin all smiles and false charm stands there with Geoffrey scowling to his rear --

ROBIN HOOD

Hello Marian. Fairest Marian. How goes the day? Bright as you are, I see.

She slams the door in Robin's face.

Another knock. She pauses, thinks, then opens it again -- Geoffrey stands there. His voice cracks --

GEOFFREY

Marian, I am undone. I -- we have nowhere else to go.

MARIAN

Though the sight of me sickens you? I suppose the threat of capture has toughened your stomach.

GEOFFREY

(begins to anger)

I am the stronger man today, yes, for not saying what I truly think --

ROBIN HOOD

And I'm sure it would be kindly and heartwarming too, but perhaps later. Let's at least continue inside.

A MOMENT LATER -- as Marian gestures to seats by the fire. The men sit, warm themselves. Marian has an almost surreal calmness to the situation --

MARIAN

Here, sit. Rest.

-- For a moment. Then the shock of what is happening wears off. She looks at the two men, angers --

MARIAN

What am I doing! Letting you two back into my life. One of you an excuse for a human being, lacking any higher morals, honor or capable of a single deep or worthy thought.

ROBIN HOOD

(to Geoffrey/misses point)

I'd resent that if I were you.

MARIAN

(to Geoffrey)

-- Not that you're any better.
Half a man. Half of you is the law
and duty and ill else. A true man
needs be -- my man needed to be --

GEOFFREY

Him? A half-witted rogue with the
breath of an ale-house.

ROBIN HOOD

How dare you, my breath is lily
fresh. I'm known for it.

GEOFFREY

(to Marian)

I was a good man. An honest man.
In love. Proud and happy with my
bride to be.

(gestures to Robin)

Along comes this article, all smiles
and Lincoln-green and off you go.

ROBIN HOOD

I think I see your anger. I took
her maiden-head. I'd be upset
about that too.

GEOFFREY

It wasn't the maiden-head I cared
about -- it was the maid.

MARIAN

Not enough to take me back though --
when I realized my mistake.

ROBIN HOOD

I'm a little unclear -- what mistake?

MARIAN

(re: Geoffrey)

He'd never love anyone more than his
duties. But I quickly came to see --

(to Robin)

-- you'd never love anyone more
than yourself. Oh, and for the
record you weren't my first.

Geoffrey wearily raises a hand as if admitting guilt.

MARIAN

I thought he was the man I would
spend my life with, what matter if
we had a taste of our future.

ROBIN HOOD

I must say I'm shocked. And hurt.

MARIAN

See. Always about you.

GEOFFREY

Anyway we're here. Now. Can you
help? For the few and far-between
good times we shared.

MARIAN

Perhaps if I help you I'll recall
what they were.

ROBIN HOOD

I feel betrayed.

GEOFFREY

Will you shut up.

ROBIN HOOD

I feel dirty.

MARIAN

(ignores Robin/to Geoffrey)
So -- what do you want of me?

GEOFFREY

(pulls out character sheet)
Does this mean anything?

MARIAN

Is it a language? It could be a
magician's runes for all I know.
It's certainly nothing I can read.
(beat/gets idea)
Have you shown this to Tuck?

GEOFFREY

Alas, he's long gone.

ROBIN HOOD

It was ever his way to go a'journeying.

MARIAN

Tuck? Friar Tuck? He's here.

(beat)

The church has its secrets. I
heard by chance -- two priests
talking in ear-shot. It's a scandal
-- and a tragedy.

(beat)

He went insane.

EXT. LEPERSARIUM - DAY

A large building with barred windows and walled-in courtyard.
There is an eerie stillness to the place, with the exception
of the odd scream and/or moan that emanates from within --
the open gate to the courtyard reveals the macabre place to
Geoffrey, Robin and Marian who crouch in bushes nearby.

GEOFFREY

I've seen men go mad with drink,
and Tuck loved his flagon.

ROBIN HOOD

And anyone else's.

MARIAN

Have you ever been within a place
such as this?

GEOFFREY

A lepersarium?

MARIAN

Where the unwanted are sent. The
lepers. The mad. The incurably sick.

ROBIN HOOD

I tend to seek more jolly abodes,
taverns and such.

GEOFFREY

(sarcastic)

I suppose you have some "ingenious" plan
to get in here. Alas, no chimneys.

ROBIN HOOD

Indeed I do. Come on.

EXT. LEPERSARIUM COURTYARD - DAY

Geoffrey and Robin stagger, giggle, and caper about the courtyard like lunatics. As they lock eyes, Geoffrey glares, whispers under his breath --

GEOFFREY

I hate you.

Orderlies appear --

ORDERLY 1

Where did these two come from?

ORDERLY 2

Dropped off by their families, I imagine. It happens. Come on, let's get these nutters inside.

They roughly drag our heroes towards the Lepersarium doors --

INT. LEPERSARIUM MAIN HALLWAY - DAY

The two orderlies lie unconscious. Geoffrey and Robin are sneaking away from them towards --

INT. LEPERSARIUM CORRIDOR - DAY

Lined with cell doors (with small windows and door bolts.) Geoffrey goes down one wall of doors, Robin goes down the other. They look for/whisper to Tuck --

ROBIN HOOD

Tuck!

INMATE

Here! Here!

Geoffrey undoes the door, opens it, peers into the darkness --

GEOFFREY

Friar Tuck?

A crazed inmate springs at him from the cell. He runs in a circle in the corridor flapping his arms like a bird.

INMATE

No, I'm a barn owl. See me fly.
Where are mice? I love to eat mice.

Geoffrey shoves him back in cell, pulls the bolt shut.

MEANWHILE -- Robin is at another row of cells --

INMATE 2

Here. Over here.

ROBIN HOOD

Tuck.

INMATE 2

Yes, I'm Tuck, let me out.

Robin opens the door, a torchlight in the hall shining in revealing -- a leper in the latter stages of the disease, arms gone, toes, face almost all gone. He staggers forward --

LEPER

Let me out!

ROBIN HOOD

Egads!

Robin slams the door. Looks in through the window bars --

ROBIN HOOD

My condolences on your state of
being, old fellow.

(shows missing fingers)

As you can see, I know what it's like.

GEOFFREY

What are you doing messing about?

Geoffrey stands at a door. Robin runs over.

ROBIN HOOD

Are you sure? I don't know my
heart can stand another scare.

VOICE FROM CELL

Robin, is that you.

ROBIN HOOD

Tuck? Yes it's me.

Geoffrey holds the bolt, ready to pull it --

GEOFFREY

Step One -- find him. Now let's
see how mad he is.

They open the door and step inside to find -- Friar Tuck, 45, fat as ever, but changed. Calmer and with the fire and pepper of constant drinking gone for his face.

He sits by candlelight at a desk studying ancient holy texts. He looks at his rescuers calmly --

ROBIN HOOD

Tuck, how are you?

TUCK

I'm fine. Although I see the years have not been kind to either of us.

ROBIN HOOD

The light is poor here, old friend, in the day I'm sure you'll agree I look splendid.

INT. LEPERSARIUM MAIN HALLWAY - DAY/THAT MOMENT

As an orderly finds his two unconscious co-workers.

INT. TUCK'S CELL - DAY/THAT MOMENT

GEOFFREY

I have to say, Friar, for a lunatic you're holding up surprisingly well.

TUCK

Sheriff? Is that you -- one of my saviors? Why this is an event, why it only seems like yesterday you were --

GEOFFREY

We can reminisce when we're safe, which at this moment we are not --

Footsteps. Geoffrey and Robin look down the corridor at - SIX ORDERLIES approaching, brandishing swords and daggers --

GEOFFREY

In fact, far from it.

ROBIN HOOD

We need your fighting fury, Tuck.

TUCK

I haven't drunk in years, and alas that went the way of my need for ale. Far away. I am a lamb.

ROBIN HOOD

Oh good. Two against --

GEOFFREY

A lot.

(pulls sword)

Come on, we can take them.

ROBIN HOOD

We? I note we're only a pair at times like this.

Robin pulls his sword also, takes a stance, thinks, then -- runs in the opposite direction! Geoffrey rolls his eyes, nods in the direction Robin ran --

GEOFFREY

Come on, Friar --

-- Only to see, that way is now blocked by more orderlies. They advance on Geoffrey from both ends of the corridor --

Geoffrey keeps the friar behind him, grabs the corridor torch with his free hand, waves it -- sends the orderlies back a step of two to one side, as --

Orderlies thrust/lunge at him from the other way. Geoffrey leaps aside as he parries. Friar Tuck breathlessly tries to stay behind him/safe --

GEOFFREY

Keep up with me, friar.

As Geoffrey now switches corridor ends/weapons -- sending orderlies back with fire, where he had fenced them while parrying swords with the new on-comers.

TUCK

How are we doing?

As the orderlies crush in. Geoffrey gets a cut on the arm --

GEOFFREY

Best think of a prayer, Tuck.

INMATE

I'm an owl. A wise old owl.

The crazy old man from earlier runs into the fray --

MISC INMATE

I see a pixie flying about.

Another madman fluttering about. And another. And a leper. Another leper. Another madman. The orderlies start to struggle/restrain the inmates, forgetting Geoffrey --

More and more inmates fill the area. It's mayhem. The orderlies are overwhelmed -- Robin pushes through --

ROBIN HOOD

Come on!

Geoffrey, Robin and Tuck push their way to freedom --

EXT. LEPERSARIUM COURTYARD - DAY

The trio flee from the melee within --

A wagon pulls in. Marian is at the reins. The wagon speeds away, as orderlies emerge, chase it.

INT. MAID MARIAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Geoffrey and Robin watch the Friar eat and talk -- and eat and eat -- "mortreus" and piglet and "lampreys in gelatine". As Tuck eats, Geoffrey prepares to sew his wound.

TUCK

So Harrick and his men are at the forefront of your suspicions?

GEOFFREY

Aye, and not just the murder of Will Scarlet. The relic is to be a gift to King John. My gut says it's an important part of all this.

TUCK

Well even from my cell I heard talk -- the church was unhappy with King John. He resists papal control of England so much so the Pope has threatened to excommunicate the country.

ROBIN HOOD

Which means -- sorry, I'm lost.

GEOFFREY

A lot of priests getting their share of the church coffers are suddenly no better off than common men.

Marian enters from outside with a clay pot and a piece of parchment. She walks up to Geoffrey, dips her fingers in the pot, removes a handful of balm, places it into his palm.

MARIAN

Here, camphor. Stops infection.

She looks down, notices her gold locket has slipped out from her dress again. Geoffrey sees it, as she tucks it back in.

Geoffrey applies balm to his wound. Marian holds up the parchment, displaying it to the room.

MARIAN

Oh and I found this in town along
with the balm.

The parchment is a "wanted pamphlet" --

WANTED FOR HERESY AND HAMSOK

REWARD

100 GUINEAS REWARD FOR ROBIN HOOD

10 GUINEAS REWARD FOR GEOFFREY MONCETTE

Along with two hand-drawn likenesses. Robin's makes him look like Apollo. Geoffrey's makes him look like an ogre.

GEOFFREY

Where are these?

MARIAN

Where aren't they? All over Nottingham.

Robin holds his portrait to the side of his face, smiles.

ROBIN HOOD

Excellent likeness.

(to Geoffrey)

Yours too.

Geoffrey rolls his eyes, begins sewing his wound -- clumsily. Marian sees he is in need of help. Now it's her turn to roll her eyes -- she takes the needle and thread.

MARIAN

Sewing is woman's work.

GEOFFREY

(awkward)

Thank you.

As Marian sews Geoffrey's wound, a moment passes between them, noted by Robin and Tuck who pause a moment to look -- and slurp on food. Then --

GEOFFREY

So Harrick wants King John's downfall. Or death. Howso? The relic, it was picked up at Liverpool, why not Dover or some Southern port close to London? And why had he allowed no one to see it until it was paraded through Nottingham?

(thinks -- an idea!)

Because it didn't really exist until Harrick got here?

MARIAN

He picked it up -- or Dulac and his boys -- from Luther just prior to its official arrival.

TUCK

But even if the relic is a forgery, it's hardly a danger to the throne.

ROBIN HOOD

Inside it? Snakes or -- I don't know.

GEOFFREY

We looked inside. Old bones on black sand. Nothing I'd like to look upon twice, but again no danger.

TUCK

Anymore piglet?

MARIAN

Sorry, Friar, I fear you've cleared the cupboards bare. Perhaps some ale?

TUCK

No, my dear. No drink for Tuck. I am truly a changed man.

ROBIN HOOD

Changed you may well be, Tuck, but you do seem sane. You're certainly not claiming to be an owl or hedgehog.

TUCK

I confess the story of my insanity is preferable to the truth. My drinking became an embarrassment.

Marian has finished stitching. She walks away. Geoffrey's eyes follow her. Robin sees this with a flicker of guilt.

Then Geoffrey focuses anew, puts his shirt back on, pulls out the paper with characters on it --

GEOFFREY

Friar, with your travels -- does this mean anything?

TUCK

Why yes. In my travels I ventured East, South East of the Holy Land -- where there are races of people with golden skin and eyes narrow yet of great beauty. Their women were exquisite -- this was before Holy men were made to take a vow of chastity too so you can imagine my delight --

MARIAN

I'd rather not.

GEOFFREY

So can you read the words?

TUCK

Err yes, yes. This is a shipping manifest. A bill of sale for --
(looks/shakes head)
I have no idea what this word is.

Geoffrey rolls his eyes, stymied again, then --

TUCK

Wait, I do know what the word is -- though I don't understand it. It's a bill of sale for "Dragon-fire."

Geoffrey hears this, thinks, recalls --

MOMENTARY FLASHBACK -- the mad hermit in his office --

HERMIT

Dragon-fire it was, I know it.
Dragons and mighty they are,
abiding in the forest.

BACK IN THE PRESENT -- Geoffrey turns to Tuck --

GEOFFREY

Dragon-fire?
(moves for the door)
Come on.

ROBIN HOOD

What's gotten into you.

GEOFFREY

Oh, and Marian --
(nervous smile)
Put on a coat. The forest is cold.

Marian is touched by this. Robin sees --

EXT. SHERWOOD FOREST - DAY

Geoffrey, Robin, Marian and Tuck ride horses through the trees. Tuck brings up the rear, more interested in the character sheet and a chicken drumstick than the road ahead.

Geoffrey focuses in for a moment on Robin talking to Marian --

ROBIN HOOD

I saw that locket earlier. Lovely.
In fact I'm surprised I didn't get
it off you when we were together.

MARIAN

It has my mother's likeness, and I
would have cut your fingers off if
you'd tried.
(remembers his hand)
Sorry. How did that happen, anyway?

ROBIN HOOD

(re: fingers)
I lost these at the siege of Casse
D'Valle. Malta. Hell-on-Earth.

Geoffrey frowns quizzically, is about to speak when --

TUCK

So where are you taking us?

GEOFFREY

To the part of the forest where
Gobby the Hermit abides.

ROBIN HOOD

What? I know these woods like the back of my hand and I've never met a hermit, Gobby or otherwise.

GEOFFREY

I saw a lot of Sherwood looking for your camp. Parts that even an outlaw like you might shy away from.

ROBIN HOOD

What are you talking about?

GEOFFREY

The Jewish cemetery.

MARIAN

In Sherwood?

TUCK

But the Jews were driven out of England decades ago.

GEOFFREY

Yes, but the dead didn't go too. And this place, a maze of crypts, long forgotten -- perfect seclusion for one who desired it.

(looks ahead)

No matter.

-- The trees part, reveal a long forgotten cemetery, overgrown, dilapidated, sad.

GEOFFREY

Here we are.

MARIAN

What a sad place.

The foursome dismount move through the graves and tombs. The place is still and eerie and has not a little menace about it. Robin wanders off to one way --

Geoffrey and Marian happen to stand together at the foot of twin graves - as Tuck passes still more interested in the page of characters. However, he glances, sees a Hebrew inscription on the twin graves --

TUCK

(reads Hebrew lettering)

These two were married - together forever in life and death.

He wonders on, not giving his words much though. Geoffrey and Marian however look at each other with sad expressions.

ROBIN HOOD
(calls)
Over here!

Robin stands at a huge open tomb. The others run over. There is fresh wood and metal shavings and the feeling of the place being used. Oh and there is more black sand at the doorway --

ROBIN HOOD
This looks promising. This wood is
fresh cut.

GEOFFREY
And more black sand.
(to Robin)
Hey, Robin, get a fire going will
you, we may need torches.

INT. TOMB - DAY/MOMENTS LATER

They foursome enter all holding a torch. Black powder is everywhere. Coffins have been turned into work benches. There's the remnants of manual work having been done there.

GEOFFREY
This is certainly where he worked.
(to Robin)
Get some light over here too.

Robin has three torches. He sticks them in crevices in the walls. Tuck goes over to the light of one, continues reading.

TUCK
It says the devil's fire was
purchased by a foreign devil, their
charming term for a white man. His
name was -- DuLac?

GEOFFREY
DuLac, yes, that would be right.

MARIAN
Black sand is everywhere. But from
where? There's no seaways near here.

ROBIN HOOD
Perhaps underground.
(beat)
I'll go get more torches lit.

Robin exits --

TUCK

Oh. Wait. Of course. I said how these people were advanced --

MARIAN

No, you spoke of their women and your chastity -- or lack of thereof.

TUCK

Well, er -- they were -- far more advanced than anywhere in Europe or the Holy Land that I visited.

(beat)

They created a powder. When you lit it -- I don't know how to describe what it did -- infernal destruction.

GEOFFREY

(looks around)

Tuck. What color was the powder?

TUCK

(thinks then --)

Why it was --

Tuck looks around, sees the black powder (gun powder) everywhere! Geoffrey has his answer from Tuck's face, as --

ROBIN HOOD

Here, I brought more fire.

Robin stands there, innocently, a flaming torch in each hand.

GEOFFREY

Turn around and get out!

ROBIN HOOD

What's gotten into you?

GEOFFREY

Get out! All of you!

PSSSFT -- sparks fly off a torch, wafting on air, tiny stars, fluttering down, down --

As outside -- the quartet run for their lives then --

BOOM The crypt blows sky-high. Geoffrey and the others are thrown through the air, land hard, look around shaken.

EXT. MAID MARIAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Geoffrey and Robin pace, Marian sits, Tuck eats.

ROBIN HOOD

I don't believe it, I can't. Will
Scarlet was a good man, he wouldn't
plot against the King.

MARIAN

How can you be sure? Will was an
outlaw and then a crusader -- Heaven
knows what that did to his head.

GEOFFREY

No. I think he got caught up in
something bigger than he realized.
And when his conscience called --

ROBIN HOOD

He sought to tell me, and because I
didn't heed his call, they must
have learned his intentions and
killed him. Because of me.

GEOFFREY

Guilt is not a cloak you wear readily
upon your shoulders, Robin. I'd
throw it off now. We have work. The
fact remains the relic is full of
infernal powder that I am sure will
come way of a flame once it's in King
John's possession on Christmas Eve.
We have to warn him.

ROBIN HOOD

How? We're wanted men. Harrick is a
man of God and above suspicion and
the tale is too fantastic to believe
even if someone would hear us.

GEOFFREY

We have to stop the relic from
leaving town.

TUCK

Do we know when they're planning to
move out with it?

GEOFFREY

No, but we will.

INT. NOTTINGHAM STREET -- DAY

A deserted walk, alleys at all turns. Perfect for Ferret who stands, waits, dagger ready for a passing traveller. Such a victim appears at the end of the street. Closer. Closer. Ferret is about to pounce out when --

Geoffrey looms up from the shadows behind Ferret.

GEOFFREY

Hello Ferret. What do you know?

He drags Ferret back into the darkness.

INT. MAID MARIAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Geoffrey bursts in, breathless --

GEOFFREY

We're too late. Harrick's already left Nottingham and the relic with him. They're both on the road.

TUCK

What to do, what to do?

MARIAN

Is there no hope?

GEOFFREY

Perhaps. Harrick was keen to reach London. He and his men rode ahead. The relic follows on with but a few guards.

ROBIN HOOD

(eyes light up)

Geoffrey, you're an outlaw now.
Time to start thinking like one.

EXT. ROADSIDE WOODS - DAY

Geoffrey and Robin stand there in preparation for what is to come -- Robin's grand design --

GEOFFREY

I wish Tuck were along. One more man is one more man.

ROBIN HOOD

He's clearly not the man he was.
"I shall not drink nor fight." Who
is this fellow?

(beat)

It'll be fine. I've done this
countless times.

GEOFFREY

This is not for the sake a few
baubles, Robin, it has to be perfect.

ROBIN HOOD

I understand the stakes and perfect
it shall be. Now shoo.

Geoffrey mounts his horse and crosses the road to trees on
the other side -- where Marian awaits him.

GEOFFREY

Ready?

MARIAN

You forget, I'm more used to this
than you are.

GEOFFREY

Thanks you for reminding me.

Marian is awkward, sorry for the remark as --

Across the road, Robin climbs inelegantly into a tree. He
affixed a rope to it --

Hooves on the road. Visible, faint, far off, the Relic on
its flat-bed. Riders with it. It nears their point. Robin
prepares mentally, smiles --

ROBIN HOOD

(to himself)

I'd forgotten how much I miss this.

As the Relic (covered in a tarp) passes by (We see the flat
bed has a driver and two St. Alban monks on it. Curiously,
there is a lit lamp/candle taper near them. Three riders
follow, who also have candle tapers on their saddles --

-- Robin swings down and he's everything we expect. Robin
Hood, dashing hero of yore, he effortlessly kicks one monk off
the flatbed before anyone knows what's happened. But then --

Robin's missing fingers weaken his hold. He lands on the
flatbed badly and the procession is off/away before Geoffrey

can get his horse to a gallop. Geoffrey rides along desperate to catch up.

The remaining St. Albanian (#1) on the flat-bed throws himself at Robin. They struggle. The riders (#2, #3 and #4) watch this, riding alongside.

#1 throws a punch at Robin, who ducks. #1's momentum sends him into the carriage driver, throwing him off the flat-bed. The flatbed now runs free, smashes through snowy branches as it races along.

Riders #2, #3, #4 swords drawn try to skewer Robin from their horses. He dodges, skips, avoids this in a way that is more comic than elegant. #2 closes in for another lunge when --

GEOFFREY

Heyy!!

Geoffrey is close behind now, gaining fast. #2 and #3 see that #1 is handling Robin in their hand-to-hand fight and fall back to deal with Geoffrey -- who charges sword drawn. #4 does likewise with Marian.

#2 and #3 look to each other, nod, pull small sachets from their robes, light fuses attached, throw them at Geoffrey.

BAMM. BAMM. Explosions close to Geoffrey on either side. His horse freaks, veers off the road into the trees. #2/#3 give chase, throwing more "hand grenades". Through trees, past branches, fast, furious --

-- Marian's horse veers the other way, #4 hot on her heels.

AS BACK WITH ROBIN -- #1 is beating the bejeesus out of him. As the flatbed rides on at brake-neck speed and -- as the horses start to uncouple.

BACK WITH GEOFFREY -- the chase has gone from trees to -- snowy open country. A vast field of white for as far as the eye can see. Tranquil -- for a moment -- then --

BAMM. Another grenade, close to Geoffrey. Another. Another. Small blasts send snow and earth up around Geoffrey, his horse freaking more and more. Geoffrey is thrown --

-- AS IN THE OTHER FIELD, Marian's pursuer #4 closes in. He throws a grenade, misses -- but the blast is strong. Marian's horse rises on hind-legs, pauses --

-- Enough time for #4 to catch her, grabs Marian's reins. They ride together, in unison, in battle, Marian attacking #4 like a she-cat. For ten yards, twenty, then --

-- A man alone stands in the field. Surreal. Still. #4 is distracted, looks -- all the opportunity Marian needs -- she pushes #4 off his horse, directly at the man. #4 screams --

-- AS IN GEOFFREY'S FIELD, he arises dazed, staggers to his feet. His horse is yards away. As #2 and #3 charge him. #2 has an un-lit grenade in hand. #3 has his sword drawn.

Geoffrey moves to run away, but thinks better of it and to the men's surprise runs at the riders. Close enough he hurls a dagger at #2, jumping on back of the dying man's horse, as #2 tries to light his final grenade --

-- As #3 comes at him, sword raises to strike, Geoffrey struggles against #2's dying death grip, prizing the grenade away from #2 a moment before #3 rides by, swings his sword.

A blur of multiple action. Geoffrey ducks under the sword swing and #3 merely decapitates #2's corpse. Then as #3 spins to come around/attack Geoffrey anew he looks down, sees --

Geoffrey has dropped the now-lit grenade in his lap as he passed by. #3 explodes on his saddle.

Geoffrey rides off to catch up with the carriage --

-- AS MARIAN surveys the aftermath of her battle. "The man in the field" was a scarecrow -- and #4 lies impaled upon it.

BACK WITH ROBIN -- the fight on the flat-bed continues. The fact is however, #1 is young, stronger, better. Robin is (sometimes comically so) a punching bag.

Geoffrey's horse emerges from trees behind them, gallops fast, catches up, jumps onto the carriage, grabbing the tarp covering the relic as he does so to pull himself on board.

In the process, the tarp comes free, reveals -- hay bales.

GEOFFREY
Where's the relic?!

ROBIN HOOD
(to #1/between being hit)
I think he has a question for you.

#1 pushes Robin down, turns on Geoffrey, lights a grenade --

-- As the horses uncouple. The carriage swerves off the road, down a slope, onto a frozen lake, sliding further and further out, stopping (finally) far from the lake bank.

All three men realize to stop fighting -- any movement could break the ice. Then, as they gingerly dismount - the grenade falls off the carriage. It hits the ice, rolls then --

-- Fizzle. It gives off only the faintest of "pops". All appears safe for a beat then --

-- The ice starts to spider, breaking in a chain reaction. The men try to outrun it, slipping almost comically.

-- The wagon is consumed. #1 is dragged under the ice --

-- Geoffrey/Robin are close to the lake bank, dive for it. Geoffrey lands safe, reaches out, pulls Robin from the water. Robin and Geoffrey lie there, gasping --

ROBIN HOOD

In the contest of saving each
other's life -- you've one-upped
me. Thank you.

GEOFFREY

Devil take you! What do you call
this farce? I thought you knew what
you were doing.

ROBIN HOOD

I'm out of practice.

Geoffrey's horse canters into view. Geoffrey rises --

GEOFFREY

An addle-fingered lute player can
claim rustiness. From you, the great
Robin Hood, I expect a little more.

Robin now rises too, his feelings hurt he's on the defensive.

ROBIN HOOD

What of you? It was your information
had us chasing this wild goose. I'm
done with it -- with you -- with --
(gets idea)
Exeter will be nice about now. Good
apples in Exeter.

GEOFFREY

Well I see one horse and it's mine,
so have fun walking there.

ROBIN HOOD

You're despicable.

GEOFFREY

Are you coming or are you apple-bound?

Robin looks at Geoffrey with disdain.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY/MOMENTS LATER

Geoffrey and Robin ride the horse together towards Marian who awaits them down the road. Robin in the rear, looking grumpy.

ROBIN HOOD

The indignity.

INT. MAID MARIAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Geoffrey and Robin dry their wet clothes by the fire, drink broth as Marian enters from the street full of information --

MARIAN

Harrick had many decoys upon the road
and as many the story on Nottingham
streets as a lure for you -- Ferret
merely told you what he knew.

GEOFFREY

Oh? Tis a pity, I just beat him
this way to Sunday.

MARIAN

The other St. Albanians, DuLac,
Harrick and the Ark -- all of it went
a different route, over hills --

ROBIN HOOD

And far away.
(Geoffrey glares at him)
What? You know there's only so
much I'll take from you.

GEOFFREY

(angers)
Or what? What will you do?

ROBIN HOOD

What I should have done went you
first dragged me into this insanity.

He storms to the door, is about to leave -- Marian looks
between the pair of them, rolls her eyes --

MARIAN

Don't go. Geoffrey needs you
Robin. He won't admit it, but --
(beat)
And I need you.

ROBIN HOOD

(charmed)
Then I'll stay.

He smiles at Marian, thinking his charm is working on her. Marian turns demurely and we/Geoffrey see her smirk. She played Robin. She turns back to both men --

MARIAN

We still have time if we act now.

GEOFFREY

To do what? To go where?

MARIAN

Why London, of course. My uncle,
Cedric of Saxony has the King's
ear. I'll see Uncle Cedric, he'll
see the King, crisis averted.

Robin is delighted with Marian. He looks at Geoffrey, decides to have some fun.

ROBIN HOOD

You know Marian, I made a mistake
letting you go.

MARIAN

You make the mistake now, Robin,
again -- thinking you let me go.

ROBIN HOOD

Whatever the why of it, I was a
fool then and I'd be a fool now if
I had the chance to get you back
and I didn't, eh Geoffrey?

Geoffrey is silent. Marian looks hurt. Robin's smile fades, seeing how his words have led to Geoffrey's lack of them. As Geoffrey oblivious, prepares --

EXT. OPEN ROAD - DAY

Geoffrey, Robin, Marian and Tuck on horses, ride down a road lined by snowy hedgerows. Geoffrey glances around --

GEOFFREY

I feel vulnerable. Rewards on our heads, open road. This is all too important for silly interferences.

ROBIN HOOD

A disguise, you say? Oh good, I love dressing up.

GEOFFREY

I'm sure.

ROBIN HOOD

What shall we be? Travellers of some kind, but what?

A wagon of travelling players appears around the bend.

ROBIN HOOD

The very thing.

EXT. OPEN ROAD (FURTHER ON) - DAY

Geoffrey, Robin, Marian and Tuck are now in the travelling players wagon. The road is now curved and lined with trees obscuring the road ahead --

GEOFFREY

I still feel bad about this.

MARIAN

Me too. Those poor travelling players.

ROBIN HOOD

Nonsense, we helped them. They'll have one more tale to act out at the next tavern they, err -- walk to.

(to Geoffrey)

And as you said, this is important.

GEOFFREY

I'm sure I'll feel better when we see London.

MARIAN

Indeed? Then look no further.

As the turn in the road reveals -- LONDON, far off but visible, a sprawling metropolis of single and two-story dwellings. Smoke rises here, there, everywhere from countless chimneys. And right in the middle, rising up, a beacon is a stark, dynamic 245 ft cathedral tower.

EXT. LONDON GATE - DAY

The foursome in their players cart are far to the rear of a line of travellers all passing through London's North Gate into the city. The going is slow because --

TUCK

The guards are checking people.

ROBIN HOOD

They're also drinking heavily,
we'll be fine.

GEOFFREY

Still, our description might --
(thinks)
One of us should hide.

Robin looks at the clutter in back of the players' wagon.

ROBIN HOOD

Back there? Have you smelled it?
It's no place for Marian.

GEOFFREY

I was thinking you.

TUCK

Heavens, you two could make a
Trappist monk forget his vows and
scream aloud. I'll go. Besides
with none of the costumes fitting
me I stick out like a sore thumb.

ROBIN HOOD

There's a wine keg back there if
that's any consolation.

TUCK

I told you, Robin, wicked Mr. Drink
and I are no longer friends.

Tuck struggles into the clutter and is lost from sight.

ROBIN HOOD

(under breath)

I miss it though, I confess. A
drunken fury, he was.

EXT. LONDON GATE - DAY

As the players' wagon pulls up to GUARDS 1 and 2 who make no effort to conceal the wine skins they carry, drink from --

GUARD 1

State your name and business.

ROBIN HOOD

We are the -- err

(checks name on wagon)

Lennox Travelling Players. I am
Jack Lennox, troupe leader. My
lovely wife - err - M - Margaret.

Marian glares at Robin, tries to smile at the guards --

ROBIN HOOD

Her brother -- Smut. He's a bit
simple, so do make allowances.

Geoffrey glares, tries to smile at the guards --

GUARD 1

Reason for visiting London.

ROBIN HOOD

We wish merely to perform. To amuse.
Perhaps enlighten. Perhaps --

GUARD 2

Yes, all right, we get it. Proceed.

They make half a motion to continue when --

GUARD 1

Hold. If you're players, let's see
a play - a day of cart horses and I
am bored unto death.

GUARD 2

That's an idea.

Geoffrey, Robin and Marian look with uncertainty --

MOMENTS LATER -- the trio stand before their wagon. The
guards (three more have wandered up) and many waiting to
enter London have gathered around, ready to be entertained --

GEOFFREY

So. Our drama shall be - shall be --

INSIDE THE WAGON - Tuck half-hears what's going on. He waits, doesn't notice wine drips from the keg onto his shoulder.

AS OUTSIDE --

GUARD 2

Get on with it.

ROBIN HOOD

(gets idea)

The Legend of Robin Hood and his arch foe, that vile villain Geoffrey, the Sheriff of Nottingham.

Geoffrey shakes his head then -- an idea. He smiles --

GEOFFREY

I'll play Robin.

ROBIN HOOD

No, I --

(gets idea/smiles)

Indeed, and I play the Sheriff.

Robin turns from the audience, grabs a prop (what isn't clear) then turns to the audience. We see that in that moment he's stuff a pillow in his tunic to make himself fat. He crouches and pulls a nasty face. He looks like a cross between an ogre and Quasimodo.

ROBIN HOOD

Here we are in Nottingham and I am its Sheriff. Look at me, oh, look at me. My belly is as round as a Christmas pudding, my skin is addled with pox and my smell, nay, my stench drives all but the ugliest girls away and even they hold their noses. Oh, and the people hate me, for I am cruel and evil and my heart is uglier than my face. Not that I care --

(jumps at audience/yells)

-- give me your taxes!

The audience jumps back, shocked, then laughs -- as Geoffrey steps forward --

GEOFFREY

And I am Robin Hood, hero to the people, ha. I let you think I'm oh so good when I'd rather slit your throats for a purse or a penny, I care not at all. I love all common folk, HA! I

(MORE)

GEOFFREY (cont'd)
despise you. I love only myself. I'm a
fake. I'm a fraud. I'm a pathetic
waste. Not that I care --
(yells)
Because I'm too stupid to see it.

ROBIN HOOD
(seethes/glares)
Oh how I hate this man.

GEOFFREY
(glares back)
And this man hates you back.

They run at each other, meeting center stage. What follows
is a savage scrap -- both men punching and tearing at each
other, falling over still at each other's throats, rolling on
the ground. This goes on, on, on until --

The two fighters realizes everyone watches shocked, silent.

INSIDE THE WAGON -- Tuck is getting more unsettled --

AS OUTSIDE -- Geoffrey and Robin get up, face the
crowd/guards who remain quiet -- then -- applause!

GUARD 1
That was the best version of Robin
Hood I've ever seen.

GUARD 2
Brief, but excellent.

GEOFFREY
Can we go now?

GUARD 2
Enter players, welcome to Lond--

GUARD 1
Hold on. I see yonder mandolin.
Play us a tune.

INSIDE THE WAGON -- Tuck shifts uncomfortable, so that by
chance the next drop of wine hits his face, runs down his
cheek. He licks it unconsciously. His eye go bright --

AS OUTSIDE --

GUARD 1
Come on, one of you must play or
why have it?

A beat more, then Geoffrey sighs, walks over, picks it up -- and sings "Girl from the North Country", a beautiful ballad sung beautifully by Geoffrey whose voice is lovely. Robin and Marian are stunned -- then realize Geoffrey is looking at/singing to her. Everyone else is delighted.

GUARD 1

You warmed my heart.

GUARD 2

Aye, n'that's quite a feat.

Marian asides to Geoffrey --

MARIAN

Geoffrey -- I didn't know you could play -- what was that song?

GEOFFREY

Nothing.

(think/turns on Marian)

No, it was something I wrote long ago. A surprise for my bride at a wedding never to be.

Robin hears. Geoffrey walks away. They get into the cart.

GUARD 1

Right, off you go. Best of lu--

-- As Tuck pushes his way free of the cart, drunker than Hell and full of his legendary fighting rage --

TUCK

You won't stop us getting through those gates!

MARIAN

Tuck, no, we're all right!

GUARD 1

Who in the Hell is this?

TUCK

Come on, bastards, who wants a ruck?

Tuck leaps from the wagon, charges the guards. He begins punching, kicking, biting and belly-bumping. As more guards push through the crowd to get to him --

-- Robin grabs the reins, "giddyups" the horses and races away from the melee thru the gates to London --

TUCK

(calls after them)

Go, my friends. Think well of me.
Think well of Friar Tuck!

GEOFFREY

(looking back)

Do you think he'll be all right?

ROBIN HOOD

Tuck against five. He'll do fine.

MARIAN

There's ten guards back there.

ROBIN HOOD

Oh. Well. It was nice knowing him.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Where the travelling players' wagon sits, deserted --

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

Crammed with life. Market vendor, business people, passersby, whores, pick-pockets, all manner else. Marian pushes through, fearlessly -- more the city girl than anyone knew.

Geoffrey and Robin however look a bit over-awed, lost, city-mice. They follow on, as Marian sees her destination --

MARIAN

Here --

EXT. CONVENT - DAY/A LITTLE LATER

Establishing. More cramped London street life.

MARIAN (V.O.)

-- We'll be safe here.

INT. CONVENT - DAY

A small, elegant place of women at worship. We see a central hall, with a large stained-bone (precursor to stained-glass) window at the far end of it. Off it to the sides are ante-chambers. Nuns walk through, solemn, avoiding the gaze of --

Geoffrey, Robin and Marian who are led through by the middle-aged Mother-Superior CYNTHIA and her young novice HAZEL.

MARIAN

Cynthia was my mother-superior back in my girlhood. I've known her since -- I can't even remember it's so far back.

CYNTHIA

Before you were even born. I've known you, when your mother carried you, longer'n you've been alive.

GEOFFREY

We must be about our night.

-- As Robin tries to make eye-contact with the more attractive nuns -- to no avail. Then, he makes eyes with Hazel. She smiles --

ROBIN HOOD

Yes. Night.

MARIAN

No, I must -- in this "dark forest" I don't know you're of use. Best stay here while I see my uncle.

GEOFFREY

How much time do we have, this night and tomorrow --

CYNTHIA

You've lost a day with all your goings on.

ROBIN HOOD

What are you saying?

CYNTHIA

Christmas Eve, why that's tonight. The whole city's abuzz with it.

GEOFFREY

It -- what?

CYNTHIA

St. Paul's Cathedral. It's where the King's to be this night. Have you seen the tower?

ROBIN HOOD

Who could miss it.

MARIAN

245 feet of it -- as a testament to
God's glory.

CYNTHIA

Well God's sharing his glory tonight.

Neither Geoffrey nor Robin understand --

MARIAN

It's the King's birthday. He'll
celebrate midnight mass and his
birthday at once then as the bells
ring telling London it's the end of
his birthday and the beginning of
Christ's, John will have climbed
the tower where he'll throw down
coins to the crowd -- oh, and one
of his rings for a lucky citizen.

CYNTHIA

Yes, St. Paul's is already crammed
with folk and midnight's still
hours away.

GEOFFREY

We have little time.

MARIAN

Cedric's estate is in Hampstead. Not
far. We'll be fine if I leave now.

ROBIN HOOD

So it's done.
(smiles/relaxes)
We need worry no more.

CYNTHIA

Yes. Hazel. Wine for the men.

GEOFFREY

Marian.
(beat/shy smile)
Thank you.

EXT. CONVENT - DAY

As Marian emerges with Cynthia who has a horse. Marian
mounts it, rides off --

Marian rides through London's narrow alleys, very adept and at home with the city --

INT. CONVENT - DAY

As Geoffrey and Robin sit, talk. Robin enjoys the wine --

GEOFFREY

I'm telling you...the first time we fought it was that business with Sir Guy's golden dagger.

ROBIN HOOD

No, no. That wasn't the first time. It was "The Thrilling Exploit of Lady Beatrice's Necklace."

GEOFFREY

Are you sure? I thought it was --
(realizes)
Since when does it have a story title?

EXT. ROAD TO HAMPSTEAD - DAY

As Marian rides past a signpost telling us this --

EXT. CEDRIC OF SAXONY'S MANOR - DAY

A large, grand building with elegant grounds. Marian rides in, up to the front of the building.

Even as she reins her horse, servants rush forward to attend to her. A few moments more, Cedric, 50, kindly, emerges --

CEDRIC

(embraces her --)
Marian, my dear. This is so unexpected. But a wonderful surprise. It makes my Christmas.

MARIAN

My dear uncle Cedric, I wish this visit was on a less burdensome business. The King is in danger.

EXT. CEDRIC OF SAXONY'S MANOR - DAY/LATER

As Cedric's carriage tears off --

INT. CONVENT - DUSK

Geoffrey and Robin, drink, continue their conversation --

ROBIN HOOD

No, that happened during "Robin Hood's
Amazing Quest for the Unicorn."

GEOFFREY

Stop with the titles. It's stupid -
- and a bit creepy.

EXT/INT. CEDRIC'S CARRIAGE/WINDSOR CASTLE - DUSK

As they approach the castle, rising up before her, it
nevertheless is far from the majestic place it is today,
rather it is little bigger than Cedric's place -- but it does
have a draw-bridge and moat.

CEDRIC

Windsor Castle.

MARIAN

It's smaller than I imagined.

CEDRIC

I'm sure you'll say the same of the
King when you see him. Many remark
on his slight frame.

The carriage rides over the draw-bridge, thru the front arch,
into the courtyard. King's men rush forward, see Cedric,
salute. He nods, ushers Marian with him inside the castle.

INT. WINDSOR CASTLE - DUSK

Cedric leads Marian through empty corridors past room after
room, towards double doors --

CEDRIC

Come. He'll be in his records
room, no doubt.

MARIAN

Where is everyone?

CEDRIC

I have no idea. It is Christmas.

Cedric throws open the double door and they enter --

INT. KING'S RECORD ROOM - DAY

Floor to ceiling with shelves of scrolls and portfolios of ledgers. More, freshly inked ledger pages hang from ropes, strung everywhere, ink drying as one would dry laundry.

CEDRIC

Here. The King is an ardent and scrupulous keeper of records.

Cedric pushes Marian gently into the maze of hanging paper, wafting this way and that --

CEDRIC

Through here. I'm right behind you.

-- But within seconds Cedric is lost to her, as papers blowing and rippling on the wind, all around, quickly disorient her -- "which way is which", she pushes through the papers, trying to find direction. It's all a bit eerie.

And throughout, Cedric's disembodied voice can be heard --

CEDRIC (VOICE)

The thing is, niece, my life and luxuries cost money. I've taxed Saxony til there's nothing left so what were my options? The Holy Land -- relics, spices and exotic clothing dyes. All very lucrative. And then King John brought everybody home.

HARRICK (VOICE)

Yes --

Marian turns, looks, as Harrick, Dulac and a HULKING ST. ALBANIAN, both step through the papers --

HARRICK

-- Why would he do a stupid thing like that?

Marian spins, runs. Dulac and the St. Albanian follows.

They play a dangerous "game" of bob-and-weave through the wafting trails of paper. On, on, deadly, surreal, then --

Dulac is upon her, grabs for her, she dodges and is lost in the papers again. Dulac holds up his hand, sees he holds nothing but Marian's locket --

-- As the Hulking Albanian charges towards movement. Pushes through papers, sees --

-- The movement is a wafting tapestry. Then in the corner of his eye more movement -- TOO LATE --

-- As Marian swings with a large metal candlestick, knocks him out.

-- She hears Dulac, sees his shadow, looks for escape --

-- Light. At the far end of the room. Marian runs towards it.

An ante-chamber with a window. Marian enters, runs to the window, sees -- below. The moat's waters, dark, forboding.

Dulac is a moment away. Marian doesn't hesitate. She swallow-dives down, down, into the water. A splash and then --

-- Nothing. Stillness. Marian is nowhere to be seen.

EXT. CONVENT - NIGHT

Re-establishing --

INT. CONVENT - NIGHT

As Geoffrey and a now very drunk Robin keep talking --

GEOFFREY

All right, one thing -- I forget.
How did you lose your fingers?

ROBIN HOOD

Err -- defending the life of my
dear friend the knight, Ivanhoe.
Have you met him?

GEOFFREY

(re. Robin's fingers)
And that's three different versions
of how you came to miss those.

Robin takes a moment -- should he reveal his darkest secret?

ROBIN HOOD

Truth is -- I lost them gambling.
Truth is I'm a bit of a fraud.

GEOFFREY

A bit?

ROBIN HOOD

People don't care about me -- not like they did. Why I'm all but forgotten the further from Sherwood I go.

(beat)

I'm good with a bow -- was, at least -- and I'm good at sly cunning. And that's about it.

GEOFFREY

It's true, you're a terrible swordsman.

ROBIN HOOD

Shall I confess something to you?

GEOFFREY

With Tuck not here, I guess I'll do.

ROBIN HOOD

When I split the arrow with the next arrow -- luck. I was aiming for next to it. I'm not half the archer people think I am.

(footsteps)

Shh, the nun's coming.

Cynthia appears, carrying two goblets. However she is uncharacteristic stony faced --

ROBIN HOOD

More wine. You are wonderful, Celia.

GEOFFREY

Cynthia.

ROBIN HOOD

Indeed, Cynthia -- my dear --

Cynthia takes but one more step then -- drops the goblets, falls forward dead into Geoffrey's arms, an arrow in her back. Geoffrey is alerted, ready for danger --

-- danger that is already everywhere. As on cue, the St. Albanians appear around them from the many side-chambers. Their longbows are drawn, aimed. DuLac is among them --

DULAC

I wouldn't move. Not an inch.

GEOFFREY

How did you find us?

Dulac tosses down Marian's locket, Geoffrey catches it --

GEOFFREY

Marian? She would never --

DULAC

Oh she didn't. She was too busy
drowning.

Geoffrey tenses, stunned. Robin grabs him, steadies him.

Hazel appears behind Dulac --

HAZEL

I told them. It isn't just the
"men" of God who oppose the King.

GEOFFREY

(seething)

You, either of you, dare speak of God.

DULAC

Do not doubt I am a man of faith.
I believe it is my God-given duty
to end John's incompetent reign.

GEOFFREY

Whatever John's weaknesses, he's
still our King. It isn't right.

DULAC

Was it right the Crusades ended at the
hand of King John Lackland? Was it
right we Crusaders came home paupers,
those we didn't leave behind buried in
heathen soil?

GEOFFREY

Right, wrong. King Richard spent
but one month of his whole reign in
England. He taxed us to poverty to
pay for the Crusades.

DULAC

History will decide who's evil.

DuLac arms his bow, pulls back the bow-string, fires as --

Geoffrey (still holding Cynthia's body) angles her up/uses
her as a shield. DuLac's arrow hits her --

GEOFFREY

Sorry, my lady.

(to Robin)

Get behind me, quick --

-- All the St. Albanians open fire, strike Cynthia's body.
Other arrows fly all about and around them as --

-- Geoffrey pushes Robin towards the stained-boned window --

EXT. CONVENT - NIGHT

As Geoffrey and Robin explode through the window and out into the night, landing in the filth of the gutter.

Geoffrey drags Robin to his feet --

GEOFFREY
Move! Run! Or die!

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT/MOMENTS LATER

As DuLac and his "monks" race down the street --

-- We rise up to --

NEARBY ROOFTOPS -- upon where Robin and Geoffrey look out at the Londontown and St. Pauls far in the distance --

-- It is only then that Geoffrey/Robin emerge. The night is truly upon them now, dark and in this instance eerily quiet.

ROBIN HOOD
Now what?

GEOFFREY
I'm out of ideas. We have to go to St. Paul's and try to see the King.

ROBIN HOOD
Always at times like this it's "we."
(beat)
I can't fire a bow. My swordsmanship was never much to speak of. I'm not going. I'm done.
(sighs)
Don't you see, in the end I'll always take the easy way.

GEOFFREY
And I must always take the hard path.

ROBIN HOOD
You can hate me if you want.

GEOFFREY

How could I? You done more than a
lot of men would.

ROBIN HOOD

Farewell.

GEOFFREY

And you, Robin. Fare you well.

Robin Hood turns, begins to climb down off the roof - and is soon lost in the night.

Geoffrey takes a moment more to look at London. He looks down at Marian's locket still in his hand, opens it. Inside, is not a portrait of her mother as she had said, but rather --

-- A small, painted likeness of Geoffrey, ten years younger.

GEOFFREY

Oh Marian.

His bows his head, his heart broken.

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT

As Harrick's carriage, driven by the Hulking St. Albanian, progresses towards St. Paul's Cathedral.

INT. HARRICK'S CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Harrick sits, calm, belying a flicker of excitement at the night to come. DuLac sits, calmer still. Cedric sits across from them, more agitated --

HARRICK

For the eleven hundredth time, will
you relax.

CEDRIC

I don't like riddles. I don't like
questions unanswered. And the fact
remains, bodies rise to the surface
and Marian's did not.

HARRICK

But it will. Tomorrow. Next week.
And by then a new, more amicable
King will be ours to rule.

DuLac looks out, sees St. Paul's looming --

HARRICK

Ah. Here we are.

CEDRIC

Yes, but Marian --

DULAC

No, but -- my men are dealing with
Robin Hood and Sheriff Geoffrey,
and as for Marian --

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT

As the carriages passes us, reveals its rear -- where Marian
crouches, hangs on for dear life.

HARRICK (V.O.)

-- She abides with God.

EXT. LONDON STREET/ALLEY - NIGHT/LATER

Geoffrey walks, the tower of St. Paul's looming high over the
other building, still a ways off but getting closer. Then --

Horses hooves, coming fast --

GEOFFREY

(under breath)

DuLac.

He almost snarls with rage, eyes blaze with anger --

GEOFFREY

(yells)

You want me?! Here I am!!

He raises his swords in a fighting stance as the horses
appear from the night -- two horses, one rider -- Robin Hood.

GEOFFREY

I will say this. You were always a
wonderful horse thief.

Geoffrey jumps on the spare horse, they gallop away --

ROBIN HOOD

Of all the ironies. Robin Hood
riding to save King John.

AS THE CAMERA -- tracks fast away forward from Geoffrey and Robin, down alley/street after alley street, filled with more and more people the closer we get to St. Paul's Cathedral.

The Cathedral tower looms large, high in the sky. Around the building from all sides, the streets and passageways of Ye Olde London are crammed with people --

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Where Christmas Eve Mass is already underway. It's a serious sumptuous affair, all the pew rows with England's gentry. Pride of place, on a throne-like pew sits KING JOHN. He stifles a yawn. An obsequious AIDE stands to his side --

KING JOHN

I'm not happy.

AIDE

Sire, anything I can do?

KING JOHN

Nothing you can do. This broach. I'm certain it's too slight for such a heavy cloak. It's going to fall free.

AIDE

I'm so sorry, my King.

KING JOHN

It's my dress servant should be sorry. I think I'll execute him.

AIDE

(gestures to guard)
As you wish, Sire.

KING JOHN

I'm joking for Heaven's sakes.
Joking. No, just put him in leg irons and whip him.

AIDE

(again gestures to guard)
I'll see to it.

KING JOHN

Still joking. Grow a funny bone.
(beat/yawns)
Mass is a bore.

King John sees a pretty maiden in another pew --

KING JOHN
(flirts/leers)
Ohh, she isn't. Hello.

EXT. LONDON STREET/NEAR ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Geoffrey and Robin's progress slows by the mass of people, who resist even the threat of horse trampling, because of the lure of coins soon to rain down on them --

GEOFFREY
This is slow going. Too slow --

ROBIN HOOD
What would you bid me do? Start
hacking at the people?

CROWD MEMBER
Mass is over -- he'll be climbing
the tower soon --

ROBIN HOOD
We have but a few moments...

They push on, whipping at the crowd with their reins --

ROBIN HOOD
(as he whips)
Sorry. Sorry. Yes, I am a
bastard. Sorry.

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Mass is over. King John and his Aide make their way to a side chapel, unaware/not noticing that the Order of St. Albans are everywhere, watching John's progress/every move.

While in a hideaway nook Marian lurks, waiting for the King to near, to warn him --

King John gets closer, closer. Marian sees her opportunity, takes a step forward --

-- And then is dragged back into the shadows by Cedric.

DuLac watches this, smiles, then turns his gaze to King John as Harrick approaches him --

DULAC
(under breath)
And so it begins --

KING JOHN

(sees --)

Harrick, I've been looking for you.

HARRICK

Here I am, King John. In the flesh.

KING JOHN

With my gift? I do love gifts. Of course it's tricky, I mean what do you get a King? I have everything.

HARRICK

Owning the bones of the Holy virgin is a once in a lifetime experience -
- even for Royalty.

KING JOHN

Can't argue there.

Harrick bids King John follow him into a side chapel -- the Parish Chapel of St. Faiths -- where the Ark sits on a table, decorated like a Holy shrine --

KING JOHN

Is this it -- magnificent ark --
look at that craftsmanship.

HARRICK

Yes. Sterling work.

KING JOHN

So open it up, let's see the old girl.

As a cathedral aide runs up --

CATHEDRAL AIDE

Sire, the midnight hour approaches -
- the tower calls.

King John hesitates, looks ruefully at the unopened ark --

HARRICK

Afterwards. Why rush it?

KING JOHN

Are you coming?

HARRICK

No sire. I confess a fear of heights.

KING JOHN

Nonsense, St. Paul's is built to
last. And the view. I insist.

They exit the chapel and turn to a staircase next to it.
They begin their climb, with Harrick glances back/around for
someone to intervene -- as the cathedral ushers urges him on.

EXT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Geoffrey and Robin are but a moment from reaching the doors --

ROBIN HOOD

Excuse me. Excuse me.

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT/THAT MOMENT

DuLac emerges from his hiding place, nods to his men. Two
St. Albanians near the main doors bolt them closed, just as --

OUTSIDE -- Geoffrey/Robin reach them/push upon them.

INSIDE -- the Hulking St. Alban monk comes up to DuLac --

DULAC

Let's be about our night.

ST. ALBANIAN

What of Harrick? Should I --

DULAC

He was a fool to go up those steps.
It's his problem.

INT. CHAMBER - NIGHT

As Cedric holds Marian close, a knife to her throat --

CEDRIC

Please niece. Be still. This
night. One night and it will all
be over. You're my blood.

As Marian back-heel's Cedric in the groin, breaks free.
Cedric staggers, blocks the door.

MARIAN

As you are my blood, Uncle, but
I'll still see it spilled.

Marian pulls a dagger from her tunic. They face off --

EXT. TOP OF THE TOWER - NIGHT

As King John and Harrick emerge into the night, and the amazing view the tower provides --

KING JOHN
(re: view)
See. Splendid, eh?

HARRICK
If you say so, sire.

Looks about at the clutter on the floor, wood and rope and debris from the tower builders --

KING JOHN
Builders left a bit of a mess. I'd complain but I fear one of my aides might put too much into it and execute somebody. They love the ax.

Harrick edges for the stair back down as --

KING JOHN
(looks around)
Where are the coins?

An ELDERLY AIDE, looks 80, steps forward, gasps for breath --

ELDERLY AIDE
Here, sire.

KING JOHN
What a magnificent sack. Did you get these up here all by yourself?

ELDERLY AIDE
Yes, sire.

KING JOHN
Take tomorrow off. In fact it's tomorrow now. Go to bed. How old are you?

ELDERLY AIDE
Thirty five, sire.

KING JOHN
You poor old fellow. Bed. Go.

KING JOHN

Now let's shower them with pennies.
I love watching them fall.

John throws shiny pennies down, falling like twinkling stars
in the moonlight. Handful after handful --

EXT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

As the scene by the door turns to madness. Geoffrey and
Robin push on the door. The crowd around them scrambles for
the falling coins.

GEOFFREY

It's no use. The two of us will
never get this open --

ROBIN HOOD

(had idea then -- yells)
People! Good people of London!
Listen! Listen to me!!

The crowd continue to scramble for coins. But many listen --

ROBIN HOOD

There are riches beyond pennies
inside. More coins. More wealth.
And look, the door is locked to
you. Open it! Help me open it,
and the world is yours!

The crowd, crazed with greed, pushes at the door -- as --

INT. CHAMBER (W. MARIAN AND CEDRIC) - NIGHT

The two fight with daggers. Fast, deadly. Marian is
brilliant -- but in the moment Cedric seems better. And he
blocks the door.

CEDRIC

Robin Hood taught you well.

MARIAN

That's your biggest mistake, Uncle.
It wasn't Robin who taught me.

She rolls, comes up, lunges for him as --

EXT. TOP OF THE TOWER - NIGHT

King John stops with the coins, remembers --

KING JOHN

I almost forgot. The ring. Umm --
not that one -- I like it. This
one was a gift from the Queen of
Portugal. Ugly woman, ugly ring.
(turns to Harrick)
Harrick? Bishop Harrick?

Harrick is gone --

KING JOHN

Dash it, I'm all alone. Oh well --

He tosses the ring over the side -- as --

INT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

St. Alban "monks" as well as unsuspecting cathedral workers,
and worshipping gentry watch as the doors strain under the
weight of the crowd outside --

One St. Alban "monk" runs through the cathedral into St.
Faith's Chapel, where DuLac lights a long taper leading to
the ark/relic. Marian lies unconscious to the side of it --

ST. ALBAN "MONK"

DuLac! Outside --

DULAC

-- Doesn't matter.

AS THE CATHEDRAL DOOR BURSTS OPEN --

People surge in. St. Alban "Monks" and Cathedral
workers/priests rush at the crowd to keep order. This adds
to the madness. Fights break out. It's a riot.

Robin and Geoffrey try to push forward --

As two St. Albanians attack. Geoffrey and Robin pull swords,
fight them as chaos reigns around them -- more people swarm
in, knock/distract the St. Albanians, for an instant -- all
it takes for Geoffrey/Robin to skewer them.

They move forward anew, a few more feet, pushing through the
crowd. Robin sees --

ROBIN HOOD

There!

Far in the distance, through pillars and banners and the madness of everyone around is --

St. Faith Chapel's door. DuLac and his St. Albanian's stand guard. Through/past them is the ark, the fuse burning as --

-- From a doorway near to St. Faith's Chapel, Cedric emerges, takes a step -- and falls dead.

In that instant Marian leaps past him, tries to dart past the St. Albanians, get to the ark --

-- And is side-swiped by DuLac. She falls unconscious mere feet from the burning fuse --

GEOFFREY

Marian!

He lunges forward, desperate -- is tackled by Robin, held back as a massive Holy statue topples forward, blocks them --

ROBIN HOOD

We'll never get there. Look, the burning wick is about done.

-- As DuLac and his men move forward, sword-striking people, driving them back -- the crowd begins to flee --

DULAC

Let's get from here!

-- As Geoffrey tries to push through the crowd, slow going --

GEOFFREY

We have to try -- come on --

A stray St. Albanian (with sword, as well as bow and arrow) charges him. Geoffrey head-butts him, stabs him with his sword -- and gets an idea. He snatches the man's bow/arrows.

GEOFFREY

An arrow could get there.

He rips off a piece of his cloak, soaks it holy water from a nearby basin. Wraps it around an arrow -

GEOFFREY

An arrow with rag soaked in water.

ROBIN HOOD

But not the archer. Not me. I'd
never make a shot like that.

Geoffrey glances at the burning fuse. It has less than 2 ft
left on it.

As DuLac's "monks" really drive the crowd back now, cutting
and hacking at them. This backward wave of people is an
added impediment for Geoffrey and Robin.

GEOFFREY

You can. You could.

There's a riot in front of them, people, swirling banners,
pillars, constant other momentary obstacles blocking their
view. It will be the shot of a lifetime if they can do it.

ROBIN HOOD

I have no fingers. I can't draw
back the bow. And I told you --
back then I was lucky.

GEOFFREY

You were brilliant, Robin! You were
the better man. You can do it.

ROBIN HOOD

I have no strength, didn't you hear me?
(idea)
Wait, you're strong.

A MOMENT LATER -- Robin eye-aims the bow/dripping wet arrow,
holds/braces the bow shaft. Geoffrey is behind him, pulls
backs the bow-string angle-aims the arrow's direction --

ROBIN HOOD

A little to the left. A little
more. More. Tiny movement.
(Geoffrey moves again)
Too much, what were you thinking?

GEOFFREY

That you're an ass.

He glances at the burning taper -- less than 4 inches remain.

GEOFFREY

Come on.

ROBIN HOOD

Right. Right. Tiny. And hold.

GEOFFREY

Tell me when to let go.

But Robin is in a world of his own, doubting, fearful.

GEOFFREY

We don't have time for this.

ROBIN HOOD

I was good once, wasn't I?

GEOFFREY

You were great. Now tell me when.

ROBIN HOOD

(sighs)

When.

The arrow flies past/narrowly missing countless persons and obstacles. It's an amazing shot. An amazing moment --

-- As the arrow reaches its mark, the wet rag-head putting out the taper's flame with a sizzle. Marian is momentarily safe.

Robin and Geoffrey look at each other, shocked, amazed, delighted. They did it. Together. They laugh, embrace, look/move forward and realize -- the fleeing people in their way a moment ago -- have now fled. They are all gone.

DuLac and the St. Albanians' focus on our heroes. DuLac gestures/nods to one of the "monks" --

DULAC

Relight the taper.

That St. Albanian runs off, as the others advance on our heroes, sword drawn. The common folk within the chamber have by now fled so it suddenly seems like a huge place yet with nowhere for our heroes to run. They raise their swords, back to back, as the St. Albanians surround them.

ROBIN HOOD

Geoffrey, what you said -- that I was the better man. Perhaps, perhaps not. But you're the better man today.

GEOFFREY

Let's beg to differ on that point. Suffice, it's been an honor.

DULAC

How heroic. How touching. I think I'll puke. Kill them --

The St. Albanians move forward, each with murder in their hearts -- weapons ready, about to strike when --

-- An arrow fired from the shadows kills one St. Albanian. A quarterstaff knocks out another. They/we turn to see --

THE MERRY MEN and FRIAR TUCK -- Robin makes the briefest of eye-contact with each, smiles.

TUCK

I don't know about any of you, but
I feel quite nostalgic.

His quaffs ale from a bottle, throws it down, and charges --

Geoffrey and Robin look at each other --

ROBIN HOOD

Marian. Go!

GEOFFREY

The King.

Geoffrey runs one way, Robin the other as around them a wild battle takes place, Merry Men against St. Albanians.

Geoffrey runs into St. Faith's chapel, where the St. Albanian bid to light the fuse is in the act of pulling down a burning torch from the wall.

As he turns Geoffrey skewers him with his sword (he drops the burning torch in the process.)

AS WITHIN THE TOWER STAIRCASE -- Robin races up the steps, steps, steps, steps -- stops panting --

ROBIN HOOD

Oh for my younger days.

Footsteps coming down, Robin looks face to face with Harrick who pauses, shocked, then runs back the way he came --

ROBIN HOOD

Heavens, I shall faint at this rate.

He trudges upwards as --

WITHIN ST. FAITH'S CHAPEL - Geoffrey runs to Marian, bends over her, strokes her hair. Her eyes open. He takes the gag from her mouth. She smiles, he smiles back but then --

Something catches Marian eyes over Geoffrey's shoulder -- her eyes go wide!

Geoffrey spins on reflex, raises his sword, just in time parries DuLac's sword-lunge from behind.

The two men cross swords in the chapel, with DuLac the better swordsman driving Geoffrey back, back, back --

EXT. TOP OF THE TOWER - NIGHT

King John continues with the pennies, hears footsteps --

KING JOHN

Ah Harrick, where have you been man? I'm almost out of pennies.

HARRICK

No, sire --

He grabs King John, puts a knife to his throat --

HARRICK

You're out of time.

Robin appears --

KING JOHN

I say, if you're not abetting him, would you help me. There's a good chap. Who are you by the by?

ROBIN HOOD

Robin Hood at your service.

AS WITHIN ST. FAITH'S CHAPEL -- Geoffrey's duel with DuLac continues. Geoffrey is almost at the relic/Marian, weakening under the onslaught of DuLac, who looks for his final lunge --

AS ON TOP OF THE TOWER -- Robin faces off with Harrick, the blade still at King John's throat --

HARRICK

It's not too late. You were an outlaw against John. Against his rule.

-- Harrick brings King John around, closer to the steps. Robin angles with them, now closer to King John's penny sack.

ROBIN HOOD

Trouble is, I admit back then I might have been in error. In hindsight I realize --

Robin snatches a penny, flicks it --

ROBIN HOOD

-- He's not that bad a king.

-- Hits Harrick in the eye. Harrick screams. Robin rushes forward, punches Harrick off his feet.

AS BACK IN ST. FAITH'S CHAPEL -- DuLac un-swords Geoffrey -- the weapon flies across the chapel. DuLac smiles --

DULAC

You know the funny thing -- you see me as the villain here, don't you?

But I believe in my actions.

(comes forward)

That's not to say I won't enjoy killing you.

Geoffrey dives for his life, feints past DuLac, rolls, comes up holding his sword. He takes a swordsman's stance --

As images float through his mind -- Hugh's murder, Will Scarlet's corpse and Marian in peril --

-- With a yell Geoffrey charges DuLac, drives him back, back, back -- but to little avail, DuLac parries each sword-blow with ease. He smiles again. But this time so does Geoffrey, nods to the ground at DuLac's feet where --

-- The flaming torch touches DuLac's robes. The flames rise up his robes in an instant. DuLac flails and tears at his robes even as the fire consumes him.

DULAC

(realizes it's hopeless)

I believe in my actions!

He staggers towards the relic.

GEOFFREY

God!

He grabs Marian in his arms, runs for their lives --

INTO THE MAIN HALL - where the Merry Men fight the remnants of the St. Albanians.

GEOFFREY

Merry Men forget the fight -- run!

Run for your lives!

Geoffrey keeps moving. The Merry Men, no fools are they, follow suit racing from St. Paul's --

AS ON TOP OF THE TOWER -- King John turns to Robin --

KING JOHN

Thank you for my life.

ROBIN HOOD

Later, sire. You can thank me when
were safe on the gro --

WITHIN ST. FAITH'S CHAPEL - DuLac falls on the relic, smashes
it open and exposes the gunpowder to his fire and --

EXPLODES

The Tower side of St. Paul's EXPLODES. The tower fissures
down the middle, the split rising up, up, up, until --

-- The whole one side of the tower starts to fall away!

AT THE TOP OF THE TOWER -- Robin and King John grab the tower
where they can/where they stand which unfortunately is the
part falling -- away, away, away -- almost in dreamy slow-
motion. It teeters, back and forth, a moment from collapse --

-- Robin looks, acts quickly as of old. A rope at his feet
is tied to stonework on the still-standing part of the tower.
As the other side falls away, so the rope unfurls. With mere
feet of it left, Robin grabs the rope --

-- As he and the King leap free of the falling tower, as it
starts to collapse/disintegrate around them. Holding on to
the rope they fly through the air just as --

-- Harrick leaps from nowhere, grabs for them, holds King
John's cloak. The three men hang there, swinging, moments
from the rope snapping under the weight of three men.

Then, slowly, slowly, King John's greatest fear this night is
realized -- the clasp on his cloak gives. Harrick, holding
the cloak falls away/to earth.

KING JOHN

I knew that clasp wouldn't hold.

OUTSIDE/ON THE GROUND -- The whole city witnesses this.

The word goes about -- "It's Robin Hood. Robin has saved the
King." Slowly a chant for Robin Hood grows and grows, louder
and louder. Robin, hero of the people once again.

WHILE AT THE TOP OF THE TOWER -- Robin and King John swing --

KING JOHN

Robin?

-- Robin doesn't hear, is transfixed by the crowd's chant --

KING JOHN

Robin Hood? Shouldn't we be
getting down?

ROBIN HOOD

Please your highness --
(smiles at chant)

Let me enjoy this but a moment more.

On the ground Marian looks about at the adoring throng, all
of them chanting "Robin, Robin, Robin." She turns to
Geoffrey, troubled --

MARIAN

This is terrible, Geoffrey?

GEOFFREY

Eh? Howso?

MARIAN

All you did. All your sacrifice --
and it's Robin gets the glory.

GEOFFREY

It's what he wanted most in the
world. Let him have it.

MARIAN

But it's not fair.

GEOFFREY

When I saw you in danger - when I
thought I might lose you a second
time and forever - I knew what I
wanted more in the world and God
willing I have it.

(earnest)

Give me a second chance, Marian, my
love. I'll never put anything before
you again. I promise. Plea --

Before Geoffrey can say another word Marian grabs him, kisses
him hard -- a decade of love denied. Their lips part, they
look up at Robin still basking in the people's love --

GEOFFREY

And besides tomorrow, when the
whole story gets out, people will

(MORE)

GEOFFREY (cont'd)
finally see I'm not the ogre the
stories make me to be.

EXT. WINDSOR CASTLE - DAY

Re-establishing.

INT. KING JOHN'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Where King John sits, faces Geoffrey --

KING JOHN
I'm sorry Sheriff, the truth must
stay buried.
(Geoffrey is stunned --)
The news that I came so close to being
murdered would unsettle England more
than it shakes already. The tower
collapsed through poor labor. Harrick
died a hero helping Robin save me.
And that will be the history.

GEOFFREY
(after a long pause)
I understand, your Highness.

KING JOHN
I'm a flawed man, Geoffrey, but I
hope I'm a good king. Nevertheless,
I fear history will paint me as a
rogue --and if that is my fate, for
the better of England now in the
present, well --
(looks into G's eyes --)
It's a burden strong men must bear.

He gestures to a large velvet bag on the floor, the
indentations from within it suggesting a load of coins.

KING JOHN
I hope this reward will in some way
recompense you for the indignity.

GEOFFREY
Your majesty is most generous.

KING JOHN
And you are most gallant, Geoffrey
Moncette.

EXT. NOTTINGHAM STREET/OUTSIDE SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The thaw of the new year has begun, along with the first buds on trees around. Street life goes on, people at work and play, with little mind now for --

Robin Hood, who stands, faces Geoffrey and Marian. He has a horse nearby, saddle-packed and ready for travel --

ROBIN HOOD

Are you sure you won't come along?

(to Marian)

Both of you.

GEOFFREY

I'm staying here. Nottingham.

(glances at Marian, smiles)

It has everything I need.

ROBIN HOOD

Not I. England is stale bread now
our adventure is at a close.

(thinks)

What shall I call it -- "Robin
Hood's Adventure with..." --

(realizes)

Excuse me. "Robin and Geoffrey's
Adventure with the Dragon's Fire."

MARIAN

What am I? Goose dander?

ROBIN HOOD

I should get away before she kills
me. Are you sure you won't come?
I hear the Spanish sun is glorious.

GEOFFREY

I hear the food is peppery.

MARIAN

And the women all have mustaches.

Robin mounts his horse --

GEOFFREY

Will you ever return?

ROBIN HOOD

Perhaps. If I'm needed. If you ever
send word. Until then, think of me
out there, somewhere, righting wrongs

(MORE)

ROBIN HOOD (cont'd)
and helping the oppressed. A changed
man. A good man.

GEOFFREY
Good-bye.

ROBIN HOOD
Good-bye Geoffrey. Marian.

He rides down the street. They watch for a moment, then walk
together into Geoffrey's office. A beat then --

Geoffrey emerges, red with anger, sword raised at the ready --

GEOFFREY
(yells)
You thieving varlet! You've taken
my share of the reward!
(louder)
Come back here!

Robin turns his horse a little, looks back, shrugs, smiles
sheepishly as if to say "hey, I am what I am."

Geoffrey relaxes his sword, smiles back. Then notices Marian
is back outside with him again, by his side. He puts his
free hand around her shoulder, they kiss tenderly and walk
back inside together.

Robin watches for a beat then turns, rides away -- for lands
and lies anew.

THE END