

SETTING: *Various locations in the kingdom of King Richard the Lion-Hearted including the throne room, the home of Robin of Loxley, and the woods of Sherwood Forest.*

AT RISE: *The woods of Sherwood Forest – a rock, a tree branch lying on the ground. The chirping of birds. The sound of wind through the trees. One-by-one, the ACTORS enter from various locations. They look around, taking in their surroundings. ACTOR #2 spies something hidden behind the rock. She bends down and picks up a quiver and bow. The ACTORS gasp. ACTOR #2 becomes ROSE OF LOXLEY. She looks around and finally spies ACTOR #1. All turn to ACTOR #1 who becomes ROBIN HOOD. ROSE crosses to ROBIN and ceremoniously presents him with the quiver and bow. ROBIN dons the quiver then reverently takes the bow, examining it. After a moment, he takes an imaginary bow from the quiver, fits it to the bow, pulls back the bowstring, aims it high into the air and lets it go...*

ACTORS

WHOOSH!

(They all watch the arrow fly through the air, then ROBIN runs off after it.)

ROSE

It was a long time ago...

ACTOR #4

A very long time...

ACTOR #5

It was the time of knights in shining armor and their ladies fair...

ACTOR #6

It was the time when King Richard the Lion Hearted ruled England...

(ACTOR #6 presents ACTOR #3 with a crown. ACTOR #3 places it on his head and becomes KING RICHARD. All bow before him.)

ALL but RICHARD

King Richard.

RICHARD

Long live England!

ACTOR #7

And in the very heart of England – a forest...

(ACTOR #10 becomes FOREST #1)

FOREST #1

A forest...

(ACTOR #11 becomes FOREST #2)

FOREST #2

A forest...

(ACTOR #12 becomes FOREST #3)

FOREST #2

A forest...

FOREST

Sherwood Forest.

ACTOR #9

A vast expanse of trees and woodlands, rocks and rivers...where animals thrived and game was plentiful...

ACTOR #8

But of all the animals that lived in Sherwood, none was more elusive than the Great Stag...

(They all turn to ACTOR #14, who picks up the tree branch and holds it over his head, becoming the GREAT STAG.)

FOREST

The Great Stag.

ACTOR #13

A majestic buck, the most sought after trophy of those who hunted Sherwood...

FOREST

The Great Stag...

ACTOR #9

Only an expert shot could bring down the beast...

FOREST

Expert shot...

ACTOR #5

And of all who hunted Sherwood, none was more determined to bring down the Great Stag than Robin of Loxley...

*(ROBIN enters. All crouch and watch as he stalks the GREAT STAG.
ROBIN removes an arrow from his quiver and fits it to his bow.)*

ROBIN

Fit the arrow to the bow...

FOREST

Fit the arrow to the bow...

(ROBIN takes aim.)

ROBIN

Sight the prize...

FOREST

Sight the prize...

ROBIN

And let... it... Go!

(He releases the arrow.)

ALL

WHOOSH!

*(FOREST narrates while watching the arrow's flight in slow-motion,
pointing to its path as they speak.)*

FOREST #1

The arrow leaves the bow, streaking towards the mark...

FOREST #2

With each moment it accelerates, its shaft flying straight and true...

FOREST #3

Closing the distance until at last the target is...

(The GREAT STAG steps back just in time.)

FOREST

Missed!

(ALL groan, ROBIN loudest of all. The GREAT STAG runs off. ROSE crosses to ROBIN.)

ROSE

What happened, son?

ROBIN

I saw the Great Stag, Mother – the Great Stag! – but when I tried to bring him down, I missed. I am not worthy to carry Father's bow.

ROSE

Expertise with the bow and arrow takes practice...

ROBIN

I practice every day!

ROSE

...and patience. Promise me you won't quit, Robin.

ROBIN

I promise. I'll work harder than ever. I'll make Father proud. And someday, the Great Stag shall be mine!

(ROBIN and ROSE exit.)

ACTOR #5

Years pass, and Robin was as good as his word, working day and night to become an expert archer. Then one day, at the castle...

FOREST #1

The castle...

FOREST #2

The castle...

FOREST #3

The castle...

(The scene shifts to the Throne Room of the Castle. ACTOR #13 steps forward as the PAGE, blowing a fanfare on an imaginary trumpet. ALL turn to him.)

PAGE

Presenting His Majesty, King Richard!

(RICHARD steps forward.)

RICHARD

My people, I come with news. The enemy has invaded our lands to the East.

(Gasps and murmurs. RICHARD raises his hand for silence.)

I will be leading our army on Crusade to retake what is ours. I vow to you, my loyal subjects that we shall return victorious!

(Cheering! Once more, RICHARD raises his hand for silence.)

While I am gone, my brother, Prince John, shall rule England in my place.

(ACTOR #4 becomes PRINCE JOHN and steps forwards.)

I ask you to show him the allegiance you have always shown me.

(RICHARD turns to PRINCE JOHN. PRINCE JOHN kneels. RICHARD removes his crown and places it on PRINCE JOHN's head.)

“Dieu et mon droit”

PRINCE JOHN

“Dieu et mon droit”

(JOHN stands.)

RICHARD

Long live England!

ALL

Long live England!

PAGE

And long live Richard the Lion-Hearted!

ALL but PRINCE JOHN

Long live Richard the Lion-Hearted!

(ALL exit except for RICHARD, PRINCE JOHN and ACTOR #7.)

PRINCE JOHN

That's that, then. You best be off, brother.

RICHARD

Jon, a great burden has been placed upon you.

PRINCE JOHN

Burden? To play King?

RICHARD

This is no game, brother. A wise ruler needs to consider every situation carefully. He must enact fair laws...

PRINCE JOHN

Fear not. Nottingham is here.

(He pulls ACTOT #7 forward. He becomes NOTTINGHAM.)

He's the Sheriff. He knows all about the laws.

RICHARD

The people must be protected.

PRINCE JOHN

Yes, yes...

RICHARD

You must put their needs above everything else...

PRINCE JOHN

Richard – your soldiers are waiting.

RICHARD

I'll return as soon as I am able.

(RICHARD exits.)

PRINCE JOHN

(Calling after him – softly)

Don't hurry back.

(He turns to NOTTINGHAM and points to his crown.)

Well, Nottingham – what do you think?

NOTTINGHAM

It suits you, my lord.

(PRINCE JOHN removes the crown from his head and studies it.)

PRINCE JOHN

The Royal Crown of England. I've waited all my life to wear this. Now, at last, it's mine – and along with it, all the power, wealth, and majesty known to man.

(He places it back on his head.)

Summon the Royal Architect.

NOTTINGHAM

The Royal Architect?

PRINCE JOHN

You heard me!

NOTTINGHAM

Royal Architect!

(ROYAL ARCHITECT enters. He bows to PRINCE JOHN.)

ROYAL ARCHITECT

How may I be of service, Sire?

PRINCE JOHN

I want you to design a hunting lodge.

ROYAL ARCHITECT

Hunting lodge...?

PRINCE JOHN

A Royal Hunting Lodge surpassing all others. I want each room trimmed in silver and gold...

ROYAL ARCHITECT

But Your Highness...

PRINCE JOHN

No buts! Draw up the plans! Hurry!

ROYAL ARCHITECT

(Running off)

Draw up the plans! Draw up the plans! Draw up the plans!

PRINCE JOHN

Summon the Royal Carpenter!

NOTTINGHAM

Royal Carpenter!

(ROYAL CARPENTER enters.)

ROYAL CARPENTER

How may I serve you, Sire?

PRINCE JOHN

I want you to build my new hunting lodge.

ROYAL CARPENTER

Hunting lodge...?

PRINCE JOHN

Work is to begin immediately. I want only the finest materials. Gold and silver and...

(ROYAL ARCHITECT enters with the plans and gives them to PRINCE JOHN. PRINCE JOHN gives one copy to ROYAL CARPENTER.)

Here are the plans.

ROYAL CARPENTER
But Your Highness...

PRINCE JOHN
No buts! Build the lodge! GO!

ROYAL CARPENTER
(Running off)
Build the lodge! Build the lodge! Build the lodge!

(PRINCE JOHN glances at his copy of the plan.)

PRINCE JOHN
Royal Architect!

ROYAL ARCHITECT
Sire?

PRINCE JOHN
Your design isn't grand enough – make it bigger.

(He thrusts the plans at him.)

ROYAL ARCHITECT
Bigger?

PRINCE JOHN
More rooms, taller ceilings, an indoor archery range... Go!

ROYAL ARCHITECT
Draw up the plans! Draw up the plans! Draw up the plans!

PRINCE JOHN
Royal Carpenter!

(ROYAL CARPENTER enters.)

ROYAL CARPENTER
Sire!

PRINCE JOHN
I want you to replace the wooden staircase with entrance hall with Italian marble.

ROYAL CARPENTER

Italian marble?!

PRINCE JOHN

With a banister of African ivory! Go!

ROYAL CARPENTER

(Running off)

Build the lodge! Build the lodge! Build the lodge!

PRINCE JOHN

Royal Architect!

(ROYAL ARCHITECT runs on clutching pages of designs and starts running circles clockwise PRINCE JOHN.)

ROYAL ARCHITECT

Draw up the plans! Draw up the plans! Draw up the plans!

PRINCE JOHN

Royal Carpenter!

(ROYAL ARCHITECT runs on clutching his tools and starts running circles around PRINCE JOHN.)

ROYAL CARPENTER

Build the lodge! Build the lodge! Build the lodge!

(They continue chanting under.)

PRINCE JOHN

Power! Wealth! Majesty! This is the life I was meant to live!

(The chanting gets even louder. ROYAL BOOKKEEPER runs in, carrying a small chest.)

ROYAL BOOKKEEPER

Your Highness...

(He can't be heard over the din.)

YOUR HIGHNESS!!

(Everyone stops and stares at him.)