

Robin, Little John, Finn, Mulch, Jack, Sue, Scarlett, Crier Tuck, Nurse Prickum, Marion, Whiff, Grub, Hug, Bigeyes, Suitcase, Sheriff

Scene 8 -The Market Curtains open

Robin, Little John, Fisher Finn, Mulch, Jack, Crier Tuck, Sue, Scarlett with their wares. Lobsters by stall.

Enter Marion and Nurse followed by the children.

Marion: Crier Tuck! Crier Tuck! You must help us.

Crier Tuck: What is it, Marion?

Nurse: **(seeing Robin who has come to stand by her and pretending to swoon)** Oh, I've come over all faint.

Robin: **(Nurse falls into his arms)** Let me help you to sit down.

Nurse: **(looking at him)** Thank you, young man. Why do I have a sudden fancy for cockles and muscles?

Finn: I cod-n't guess!

Marion: It's nurse Prickle-Prickum. She's lost her mojo.

Robin: **(standing with his crotch to her)** When did you last see it?

Nurse: **(looking at Robin)** I haven't yet? **(Marion bumps her)** What? Oh yes, I saw 2 men with Mo Jo.

Sue: **(looking into her ball)** Two men in white?

Nurse: Sheet.

Sue: It's not, my crystal ball never lies.

Nurse: Not your ball – two men came and took them in a white sheet.

Mulch: Two men came and took them in a white sheet!

Nurse: Is there parrot around here? Yes, Mo and Joe – the King's children. I've been looking after them while their parents are away, and now they've been snatched. Oh, who would do such a terrible thing? I will be ruined. Brutus-Wootus will

never get to see my bedside manner. I will banish-ed to the tower, never to show my face again.

Little John: That might be a good thing!

Nurse: You can trot off!

Robin: Any idea where they could have been taken?

Nurse: I heard woods.

Jack: Which woods?

Nurse: Well, I don't know. I didn't happen to be wearing my stethoscope so I could hear in close-up!

Enter Whiff out of breath

Whiff? Where have you been?

Whiff: **(breathless stressing last bit of word)** Coppice.

Nurse: Oh god, find him the toilet quick! He's got to pi...

Robin: Wait! I think he said...Coppers.

Scarlett: Coppers? Does he mean coppers as in police or coppers as in money? Which one is it? I don't know! It could be either.

Robin: **(to Whiff)** Big breaths.

Nurse: Thank you! **(Robin looks confused)**

Robin: **(to Whiff)** Just take big breaths. **(Whiff does)** Now, what did you say?

Little John: He said Coppice. Am I the only one with decent hearing here?

Robin: Little John, sshh...**(to Whiff)** go on...

Whiff: Coppice. I heard one of them say it when I was in the toilet.

Little John: Should listen to the horse!

Marion: Then we've no time to lose. We must go and rescue them. Come on – to Coppice Wood **(Marion goes to move but no one else does)**

Crier Tuck: Coppice Wood is cursed, Marion. You know that. No one who enters Coppice Wood ever comes back out.

Mulch: ...alive!

Enter Sheriff laughing. Crier Tuck rushes over and rings his bell.

Crier Tuck: Oh yay! Oh Ya....

Sheriff: **(grabbing Crier Tucks Bell) NOT** in the middle of my evil laugh.

Crier Tuck: Sorry!

Sheriff continues his evil laugh. When he stops Crier Tuck carries on...

Crier Tuck: Oh Yay! Oh Yay! Oh Yay! Sheriff Brutus Botox of Burghclere.

Sheriff: Oh, you poor deluded fools. Crying over your little Babes, are you? Boo Hoo. The Babes are gone! They are no more! They are...lifeless! **(he laughs again and crowd reaction)** I had them taken to the Woods to be...disposed of. And soon, I will be in charge and rule all of England. And you can't do a thing about it. Oh, you are quite right Crier Tuck, Coppice Wood is cursed. The Flock of Fiends! No-one ever gets out of Coppice Wood...alive! What a shame!

Nurse: Why you wicked, evil, rascalion.

Sheriff: You flatter me!

Nurse: Flatter you – I've a good mind to give your thrapple a throttle and your brothel sprouts a squeeze! And, to think I was willing to give you a private full medical.

Sheriff: Over my dead body.

Little John: Careful what you wish for.

Sheriff: So long puny peasants. I have 'royal' business to attend to **(He starts to leave)** Oh, and Marion, you might want to get your wedding dress on. I have it on the Kings orders that we shall be wed very soon. See you at the altar!

He goes off laughing.

Nurse: Well, no offence Marion, but I thought he was the more mature woman type. Oh well, always the bridesmaid, never the bride...

Marion: I am NOT marrying him! **(looking at others)** Well, what are we going to do?

Robin: We're going to fight! We'll venture to these woods and free the Babes! I don't believe that the woods are cursed. And even if they are, we'll find a way. And when they are free, then we will strike back against the beastly Sheriff Botox and greedy King John. Their tyranny shall not be allowed to continue. We, the impoverished, shall stand up to these money-grabbing, aristocrats. We shall confront their greed head on! We shall battle and brawl to the finish! We shall show them that we will not be crushed! We shall not stand defeated! We are strong! We are brave! We are courageous! United, we are the Hero's England needs! All those with me say aye!

There is an awkward silence.

Crier Tuck: Ummm...Robin, it's cursed! The Wood....

Finn: No one gets out alive.

Scarlett: Flock of Fiends!

Jack: Besides which, the Babes might already be....

Mulch: ...fodder!

Sue: **(looking into her crystal ball)** Wait! I see something! **(they all gather to her -All: yes)**...my ball has a message...**(All: yes)**...it's coming through the haze...**(All: yes)**...it's telling me ... **(All: yes)**...to...**(All: yes)**, ah, sorry...it's gone! Just a bit of turbulence! **(All: Uhhh!)** Sorry Robin, crystal ball says no.

Marion: **(coming to stand near to Robin)** Well, I say, aye!

Robin: Thank...you, Marion. Nurse Prickle-Prickum, how about you?

Nurse: Oh no, no. no, no, no. I hope you're not going to force me against my will young man.

Robin: We could do with a 'well-equipped' woman like you Nurse Prickle-Prickum...just in case of emergencies!

Nurse: Well, I am well equipped! Oh, I feel a bit like a transplant patient – I've had a change of heart. Go on then, count me in!

Robin: Thank you, Nurse Prickle-Prickum. So, that's me, Marion, Nurse Prickle-Prickum and Little John. Anyone else?

Little John: Thanks for *saddling* me with helping!

Hug: Do you need a hug, horsie? **(goes to hug Little John)**

Big Eyes: We can help!

Kids: Yeah...!

Robin: Well, thank you my *Mini* Men, I am touched by your enthusiasm to help.

Marion: **(annoyed, and turning on others)** What is wrong with you? Why are you letting the children be the brave ones? I thought we were a team. We Kingsclere folk have always helped each other, haven't we? Why are we standing back and letting this kind and rather wonderful, stranger to our village stand up and fight our battles? We need to rescue our King's children. We need to stand up to these rogues, these scoundrels. Do you want to be scared little mice all your life? Bowing down to the monstrous money-grabbers? Or would you rather all work together and be the bigger *Merry* Men that Robin speaks of, and that I know you can be.

SONG: IF WE ALL WORK TOGETHER (suggestion from Craig Hawes – rights required)

All: We're in!

Scarlett: Here's to Robin Hood and his Merry Men! **(All shouting: Merry Men!)**

Curtain closes

END OF ACT 1