

entire time? Marian—swallowing a biting comment—tells her that if she truly loved Robin, she'd set him free. This baffles the Princess who retorts with “No, if you love someone, you lock them up and never let them get away! Also, which is Robin's better leg? I need to pick the right one to hobble...” Seeing no other choice, Marian challenges Princess Joan to a game of chess: whoever wins gets Robin. Princess Joan agrees.

END OF BOARD FOR EITHER OPTION

Marian begins to assemble the peasants who escaped the Sheriff's ambush on her side of the chessboard when Sir Guy/Princess Joan overrides her and informs her that peasants are only good enough to act as pawns. Therefore, only Maid Marian, her handmaiden, and the knight Mad Mardigan remain as capitol pieces while the peasants are stuck in the first row. With Marian now sorely handicapped, Sir Guy/Princess Joan trots out his/her knights and the Sheriff's guards to fill the black side of the chessboard. As the game begins, it's very clear that the Black Side has the upper hand; it is filled with trained fighters and killers. Marian quickly puts her plan in action— the peasants need only distract the Black Side long enough for their fellow rebels to free the Merry Men. As the prize of Marian/Robin's hand draws ever closer, the Hen Knights are freeing the Merry Men one by one and having them take the place of the tower guards. Sir Guy/Princess Joan manages to get Marian into check and challenges her to a final duel. Marian accepts. While she distracts the Black Side, Mad Mardigan scales the side of the tower with the Merry Men screening him from the guards. Upon reaching the top, he calls out that the fight is over, even as Marian puts Sir Guy/Princess Joan on point. Mad Mardigan frees the prisoner and reveals... a guardsman in Robin's hat and cloak. The Sheriff appears from the opposite tower with a captive Robin Hood, taunting “I'm sorry to say, but it seems your princess was in another tower...” Robin replies with: “Not a princess and it's another castle—not another tower. You're really awful at this, aren't you?” The Sheriff silences Robin with good old fashioned violence, and informs everyone that the execution/wedding of the outlaw Robin Hood will take place at 4 o'clock on the board.

THIRD BOARD

Prince John is all smiles, after all, there's about to be an execution or a marriage (dependent on which version of board 2 is run), and in either case it means Robin is out of the game. Nothing could possibly ruin his day. Suddenly, King Richard's voice rings out, and Richard appears, flanked by his knights and looking very disapproving. Prince John throws an absolute hissy fit. Meanwhile the Sheriff rushes to point out that King Richard is clearly an impostor—for the real Richard is dead. Richard, unamused, approaches the Sheriff from behind and waits until the Sheriff notices him to growl out a threat. The Sheriff retreats, and Richard takes the stage next to John. Richard is demanding that Robin Hood be freed and John stop this foolishness when John finds a part of his spine and (petulantly) shouts, “No!” He goes on to indicate that this is his kingdom now, he's already made plans for his coronation, and for Richard to suddenly appear back from the dead and demand the crown is the equivalent of a usurpation of God's Will. Richard—very obviously annoyed—relents and turns John's last phrase against him: the two shall have a trial by battle chess (everyone groans and one of the peasants shouts 'Not again!') to determine the rightful King of England.

John agrees, nominating himself as the leader for the Black Side where the Sheriff will sit in his place. After all—without Robin to lead the Merry Men, however will they win? Richard, the Sheriff, and Princess Joan/Sir Guy give John a look as Richard flatly announces that it will be he that leads the white side. John immediately tries to find some other game they could play—even offering for Richard to duel the Sheriff. Richard flatly declines and the sides are taken with Richard standing in as the White Side King while John remains on the stage. John is given a sword by one of his nobles that he threateningly holds toward Robin as he reminds his brother that if the outlaws try anything funny, he'll take it out on Robin. With that threat looming, chess begins.

The Black Side almost immediately falls to cheating—though John studiously ignores it. Every time it is brought up, John threatens Robin a bit more and demands that Richard quit questioning the tactics of these stalwart Englishmen. Without much recourse, the White Side fights as best they can. During one of the final moments when the cheating of the Black Side leads to the abuse of one of his townspeople, King Richard can no longer stand this and demands that they finish the fight as two kings: man-to-man. John cowers and whines, drawing Richard closer, before surprising him with an attack—driving Richard back. Just as Richard begins to gain the upper hand, the Sheriff and Princess Joan/Sir Guy take the field—forcing Richard into a 3v1 which he is sorely losing. The Merry Men storm the stage and free Robin—giving him his sword and letting him jump into the fight. Robin and Richard together begin to win out against the three. Sir Guy/Princess Joan is the first to be dispatched. Robin defeats the Sheriff next, leaving Richard to defeat Prince John. Once all three have been defeated, Richard exiles them from England on pain of death, and absolves Robin and the Merry Men of their criminal status.



CHARACTER LIST

LEADS

Robin Hood: Robin Hood is the dashing and beloved hero of Nottingham. He will do anything to defend the people from the oppression of the Sheriff and Prince John, sometimes leaping before he looks.

King Richard: Weary from the rigors of the Crusade and injured on his way through France, Richard has decided to take advantage of the fact that no one knows he has returned to get a true picture of how his people are being treated. Brave and concerned for his kingdom, he is a boisterous adventurer at heart, ill-equipped to hide himself or his feelings, and will always take the more daring route if he can find it.

Maid Marian: Raised in a court ruled by John and subject to her cousin's wild mood changes, she has mastered the art of keeping her thoughts and feelings to herself. Stifled by the court, she turned to subterfuge and sneaking out to Sherwood Forest. There she has made friends and learned skills not suited to a lady. She found her home and she's willing to fight John and anyone else to keep it safe.

Prince John: Richard's power-hungry and greedy brother, he sits on the throne of England in Richard's absence. He is prone to temper-tantrums and histrionics, always whining to get his way. John's best bros are Waldemar Fitzurse, Maurice de Bracy, and Reginald Front-de-Boeuf.

Sheriff of Nottingham: An out-and-out, down-and-dirty thief and murderer, makes no distinction between right and wrong and therefore has no conscience or pangs of guilt. Her/his actions are motivated only by egoistic considerations of personal gain at any given moment.

Princess Joan: John and Richard's vain, spoiled, narcissistic sister who knows how to manipulate others to achieve her own ends. Joan is the baby of the family and has been given everything she has ever wanted. And she wants Robin.

Sir Guy of Gisborne: Sir Guy has agreed to support Prince John and the Sheriff in exchange for the hand of Maid Marion. He is convinced of his superiority and doesn't understand why Marion isn't falling at his feet.

WHITE SIDE

Merry Men

A band of rabble rousers and rogues, these men are fiercely loyal to Robin and will fight by his side because they fully believe in his cause. They have seen the injustice wrought by Prince John, the Sheriff, and all their followers. While they can sometimes be overly ambitious in their efforts to do right by the townspeople, things always seem to work out in their favor.

Alan A Dale: A cheeky opportunist, Alan will make sure he's got his own escape route sorted before he stops to help you. He has the gift of the gab and always tells the truth, provided he can't think up something more entertaining.

Baldewin Gotfrid von Magdeburg: The youngest of eight children, he is the son of a baron in the Holy Roman Empire. After deciding he was unlikely to inherit much of anything, he departed on an adventure and has just arrived in England, amazed by everything he sees as it is so different from his native HRE. He has been recruited by the Merry Men to join their noble cause. Extremely kind and polite to all, he can be quite verbose when you get him talking about one of his favorite things, and has a knack for being endearingly clumsy.

Friar Tuck: Loves food, ale, and fighting, almost as much as his God. He can be jolly, foolish, lecherous, a devout holy man, or a wiseman depending on his mood.

Gilbert Whythehonde: A dastardly buccaneer ready to unbuckle any amount of swash, or so he'd like to believe. Unfortunately, his swash is mostly cheesy puns and sardonic one liners.

