

A New Musical

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S

The

Black

Arrow

adapted by Ross Carter

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

<i>Joanna Sedley</i>	Heiress, age 16
<i>Dick Shelton</i>	Ward, age 17
<i>Sir Daniel Brackley</i>	A wealthy villain
<i>Sir Oliver Oates</i>	Country parson, in loco parentis to Dick
<i>Lord and Lady Foxham</i>	Guardians of Joanna
<i>Alicia Risingham</i>	Friend of Joanna
<i>Sir John Hamley</i>	Alicia's paramour
<i>Myrtle</i>	Servant to Sir Oliver
<i>Greensleeve, Brownshoe, Redcap</i>	Men of the woods
<i>Throgmorton</i>	A courtier
<i>Ensemble</i>	Serfs, knights, soldiers, ruffians, etc.

SETTING

England during the Wars of the Roses

LIST OF SONGS

ACT 1

<i>What Color Is Your Rose?</i>	The Company
<i>Marry Whom You're Told</i>	Lady Foxham and Joanna
<i>A Very Bad Thing</i>	Sir Oliver
<i>It's A Living</i>	The Company
<i>I Mean To Be A Man of Means</i>	Dick and Joanna
<i>The Forest Song</i>	Greensleeve, Brownshoe, Redcap
<i>I'm a Girl</i>	Joanna and Dick
<i>Boldly, My Love</i>	Dick

ACT 2

<i>A Damsel In Distress</i>	Joanna
<i>Trouble, I Wot</i>	Dick
<i>I Wouldn't Get Married</i>	Myrtle
<i>Throgmorton</i>	Throgmorton
<i>What Are You Doing In My Heart?</i>	Lady Foxham
<i>It's A Wedding</i>	The Company

ACT 1

SCENE 1

Setting: An open place.

Lights Up: Serfs are toiling in a field.

A knight enters and accosts a serf.

KNIGHT

You, there, peasant, toiling in the muck!

A SERF

Yes, sir?

KNIGHT

Are you for Lancaster or for York?

SERF

Well, I ...

KNIGHT

Answer me!

The serf flips a coin.

SERF

Tails.

KNIGHT

What!

SERF

I mean ... umm ... York.

KNIGHT

Very well, then. Carry on.

The knight moves on as the entire company enters. The ensemble actors are mostly serfs.

SERF

It seems like these days everyone wants to know ...

SONG: WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE?

THE COMPANY

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE?
WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE?
YOU ANSWER WRONG,
IT WON'T BE LONG,
AND YOU WILL COME TO BLOWS.

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE?
WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE?
YOU CHOOSE THE HOUSE
THAT YOU ESPOUSE
AND EXPOSE
YOUR ROSE.

A SERF

IF SOMEONE ASKS, ARE YOU OF YORK'S CREW?
THEN TWISTS YOUR ARM INTO A CORKSCREW
YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD HAVE SHOUTED HAIL LANCASTER!

ANOTHER SERF

BUT IF YOU ANSWER I'M FOR LANC!
A ROPE MIGHT GIVE YOUR NECK A YANK.
NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, IT'S A DISASTER!

THE COMPANY

WHO'S YOUR MASTER?
IS HE YORK OR IS HE NAMED LANCASTER?

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE?
WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE?

A SERF

WE'RE UNDER DURESS,
AND FORCED TO CONFESS.

ANOTHER SERF

IT KEEPS YOU ON YOUR TOES.

THE COMPANY

THE LANCASTERS ARE RED.
THE HOUSE OF YORK IS WHITE.
IF SOMEONE GOES,

KNIGHT

“SHOW ME YOUR ROSE!”

THE COMPANY

YOU BETTER GET IT RIGHT.

SIR OLIVER

I PRAYETH THE LORD ABOVE IN HIS MERCY WILL FIXETH
THIS MESS WITH A SUCCESSOR TO HENRY THE SIXETH.

A PERSON

NOW EVERYONE KNOWS THAT YORK’S THE KING’S
“APPRENTICE,”
AND HAS BEEN SINCE THE KING’S NON COMPOS MENTIS!

ANOTHER PERSON

King’s Harry’s renowned
As a clown with with a crown
On a good day he can’t even tell up from down.

ANOTHER PERSON

York’s done a good job,
Though a snob and a slob,
And the things that he says carry weight with the mob.

ANOTHER PERSON

There’s so much anger in the country right now.

The knight accosts a serf.

KNIGHT

Hey, buddy, what color is your rose?

SERF

Fuchsia.

After a beat, the knight consults his retinue.

KNIGHT

Is that red?

RETINUE

I think it's got some red in it. Sort of whitish/reddish, maybe, I'm not sure, etc.

KNIGHT

Carry on, then.

THE COMPANY

THE FRENCH IN THEIR CHATEAUS,
DON'T BOTHER WITH A ROSE.
IT'S LOUIS OR CHARLES,
MEN SETTLE THEIR QUARRELS,
IN THREE INCH HEELS AND HOSE.

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE?
WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE?
THE SHADE OF THE PETAL
THEY'RE GOING TO SETTLE
WITH ARROWS AND WITH BOWS.

A PERSON

WHILE FRENCHMEN EAT RAGOUT AND CHORTLE OO-LA-LA,
WE'RE HAVING A BROUHAHA
THAT KING EDWARD BEGAT.

ANOTHER PERSON

IN ENGLAND EVERY SERF, VILLEIN, AND VASSAL
MUST BE READY TO WRASTLE
AT THE DROP OF A HAT!

THE COMPANY

[SNAP] LIKE THAT!

THEN SPLAT! YOU'RE FLATTENED WITH A BAT.

The knight accosts a serf.

KNIGHT

Hey, buddy, what's your politics?

SERF

I'm a liberal.

A silent beat before the entire company shouts imprecations at the serf.

THE COMPANY

YOU HAVE TO HAVE A ROSE,
AND WEAR IT ON YOUR CLOTHES.
WITHOUT A LAPEL
THERE'S NO WAY TO TELL
YOUR COMRADES FROM YOUR FOES.

YOU BETTER WEAR A ROSE,
AND MAKE SURE THAT IT SHOWS.

A PERSON

FOR IF YOU SHOULD FAIL,
YOU'LL WITHER IN JAIL,
AND SLOWLY DECOMPOSE.

THE COMPANY

Yewww!

A KNIGHT

WALK ANY ROAD, YOU COME TO A FORK,
ONE WAY LANCASTER, THE OTHER WAY YORK.

A SERF

THERE'S ONE WAY WE COULD STOP THIS INSURRECTION,

WE'LL SIMPLY HAVE A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION.

A SERF

I've got it! We'll set up an electoral college, based on the number of elected representatives, and we'll all get to vote but some votes will count more than others!

The company ad libs along these lines: Are you crazy? Don't be stupid! That'll never work! That's the dumbest thing I ever heard!

THE COMPANY

ALL ENGLAND'S A HOUSE DIVIDED,
WHILE SUCCESSION REMAINS UNDECIDED,
OUR YOUNG MEN ARE LEAVING THE FARMS,
TO ANSWER THE NEXT CALL TO ARMS.
BLOOD IS SPILLED IN EACH VILLAGE AND TOWN,
WHILE TWO HOUSES CONTEND FOR THE CROWN,
ENGLISH MOTHERS ARE WEEPING IN HANKIES,
DAMN THE YORKIES AND DAMN THE DAMN LANC-EYS,
EVERY ONE OF US BELLOWS AND MOURNS,
AND CURSES THIS WAR OF THE THORNS,
THE TROUBLE GROWS
CAUSE NO ONE KNOWS
WHAT COLOR IS YOUR ROSE.

End of song.

A serf emits a horrifying scream. We see the tip of an arrow protruding from his chest. He turns and falls so we see the rest of the arrow protruding from his back. There is a paper attached to it. Screams and gasps as the man falls. The named characters exit as the ensemble crowds around the fallen man.

A SERF

Why, it's poor Appleyard! Killed with a black arrow through his heart!

ANOTHER SERF

Look, there's a letter attached to the arrow! Read it!

The first serf snatches the letter, ripping it in two.

SECOND SERF

Now look what you've done!

The first serf holds the letter fragments up and studies them, scowling. After a moment he turns them over, and we see that he has been studying the blank side of the paper. He hands the paper to the second serf.

FIRST SERF

Here, read it for yourself.

The second serf takes the two fragments and holds them together in various obviously incorrect ways.

A THIRD SERF

Here, let me try.

The third serf snatches the paper. Meanwhile, DICK has entered.

DICK

Here, what's going on?

FIRST SERF

See for yourself, sir.

DICK

Appleyard! Poor, poor Appleyard! Killed with a black arrow! Who has done this?

The serfs shuffle their feet, look around, and mutter.

THIRD SERF

Letter for you, sir.

DICK

What? A letter?

THIRD SERF

It was attached to the arrow, sir. We didn't read it, sir. Respecting your privacy, sir.

DICK takes the letter and reads it as the serfs crowd around, listening.

DICK

"I had four black arrows under my belt,
Four for the griefs that I have felt,
Four for the number of ill men
That have oppressed me now and then.
One is gone; Master Bennet Hatch,
That burned Grimstone, walls and thatch.

FIRST SERF

Aye, Bennet Hatch, he be killed with a black arrow just like this one. I've been meaning to tell you, sir.

DICK

The second arrow is well sped;
Old Appleyard is dead.
One is for Sir Oliver Oates,
That cut Sir Harry Shelton's throat.
(My father! Sir Oliver cut my father's throat? Never! Sir Oliver has been a second father to me!)

Sir Daniel—(Sir Daniel! My guardian!)

Sir Daniel, ye shall have the fourth;
We shall think it fair sport.
Ye shall each have your own part,
A black arrow in each black heart.
Get ye to your knees for to pray:
Ye are dead thieves, by yea and nay!
Sincerely yours,
The Black Arrow Gang."

Why, this is the act of a barbarian!

A SERF

Aye, it's the worst doggerel I ever heard.

ANOTHER SERF

He rhymed fourth and sport!

Sir Oliver enters.

DICK

Alas, poor Appleyard! I really didn't know him all that well.

SIR OLIVER

Dick! Dick! There you are, boy! Good heavens! What has happened here?

DICK

It's Appleyard, Sir Oliver. Killed with a black arrow.

SIR OLIVER

God rest his soul!

DICK

There was a letter attached—

SIR OLIVER

There's no time for that now. Dick, a messenger has just arrived from Sir Daniel.

DICK

What says my guardian?

SIR OLIVER

Dick, my boy, a battle is waging on the road north of Tunstall. Sir Daniel commands all available men in the parish to join the fight.

FIRST SERF

Begging your pardons, sirs, we've got critical work to do. Can't spare a moment longer. Very critical work.

SECOND SERF

Urgent work.

THIRD SERF

All three of us.

SIR OLIVER

Stay where you are. Now Dick, Sir Daniel has very specific instructions for you.

DICK

Me? I know nothing about fighting. Why has Sir Daniel chosen me? I barely know the man, even if he is my legal guardian. I don't want to go.

SIR OLIVER

You must go, Dick. No one dares disobey Sir Daniel Brackley. That would be a terrible mistake. Now. You are to take command of as large a force as you can muster and lead them to Sir Daniel. He awaits you at the Tunstall Inn. Oh, Dick, I know you are still but a youth—

DICK

I am seventeen. Going on eighteen.

SIR OLIVER

Yes, my boy, soon to reach the age of majority and receive your inheritance! Are you ready to become a man, Dick?

DICK

Aye, Sir Oliver, that I am!

SIR OLIVER

Then show a man's mettle and round up every able-bodied peasant in the parish. I wot you'll turn them into soldiers before you reach Tunstall, Dick Shelton!

DICK

If you insist, then aye, Sir Oliver, that I will! But this letter—

SIR OLIVER takes the letter without looking at it.

SIR OLIVER

No time for that now, Dick. You have your orders!

DICK

All right, men. You heard Sir Oliver. You are now under my command. We march forthwith for Tunstall, there to fight under the banner of Sir Daniel!

A SERF

One question, sir, if I may?

DICK

Speak, peasant.

SERF

Which side will we be fighting on?

DICK looks inquisitively at Sir Oliver, who shrugs his shoulders.

DICK

That is none of your affair. Left face!

DICK faces left. The conscripts face right.

DICK

March!

DICK and the SERFS march off in opposite directions. SIR OLIVER watches them leave.

SIR OLIVER

I think he's getting the hang of it.

Exit. Lights fade.

SCENE 2

Setting: Foxham House.

Lights Up: Lord and Lady Foxham.

LORD FOXHAM

Thank you, Lady Foxham, but as the girl's guardian it is my duty to explain the matter. This is no business for a woman.

LADY FOXHAM

Marrying a man is no business for a woman?

LORD FOXHAM

I mean introducing a girl to her intended is a man's job. This is business.

LADY FOXHAM

Aye, Lord Foxham, where you are concerned, marriage is indeed business.

LORD FOXHAM

What do you mean by that? Your marriage to me was arranged, was it not? And I warrant I've given you little grounds to complain.

LADY FOXHAM

Or to rejoice.

LORD FOXHAM

Oh come now, are we going to start bickering again? Bicker, bicker, bicker. That's all we do. Bicker, bicker.

LADY FOXHAM

You might have consulted me before you chose the girl's husband.

LORD FOXHAM

And why in heaven's name would I do that? I've made a fine match for the girl. Sir John Hamley. The lad is moneyed and titled. You should both be grateful.

JOANNA enters, followed by ALICIA and HAMLEY. Joanna is a lively girl of sixteen. Alicia, about the same age, is from a modest villager family. Hamley is young and quite the opposite of brave.

LADY FOXHAM

Look, here she comes. Do let me break this to her.

JOANNA

Oh, Stepmother! Stepfather! Alicia has the most wonderful news!

LORD FOXHAM

Joanna, I have some news of my own.

JOANNA

Oh, please, Step-papa, let us tell Alicia's news first! It is so exciting, I do not think I can contain myself.

LORD FOXHAM

Very well, Joanna.

JOANNA

Lord Foxham, Lady Foxham, I am pleased to announce that Alicia is engaged to be married!

LADY FOXHAM

That's very nice, dear. May I ask to whom?

JOANNA

To Sir John Hamley!

LADY FOXHAM

Don't tell me you forgot to consult the groom.

LORD FOXHAM

I meant to. I can't be expected to remember everything, can I?

LADY FOXHAM takes JOANNA aside.

LADY FOXHAM

Joanna, you know of course that I have served you in loco maternis since you were brought here as a tiny thing.

JOANNA

Yes, Lady Foxham, you've been most like a mother to me.

LADY FOXHAM

And I've watched you grow, Joanna, into a beautiful young woman. A woman who deserves a fine young man with whom she can be happy.

JOANNA

Yes, my lady.

LADY FOXHAM

Unfortunately, Lord Foxham has fixed things so that isn't going to happen. (*To Lord Foxham*) You can take over now.

JOANNA

I don't understand.

LORD FOXHAM

What my wife means to say, Joanna, is that your marriage has been settled. I have arranged for you to marry my kinsman, Sir John Hamley.

JOANNA

Oh, no. No, no, no.

LORD FOXHAM

Now Joanna, listen.

JOANNA

But Sir John is in love with my very best friend Alicia. And she is in love with him. How can you possibly think I would come between them?

LORD FOXHAM

Joanna, I think perhaps I did not make myself clear. You are going to marry Hamley. It is all arranged.

JOANNA

Alicia is like a sister to me! I could not betray her by marrying the man she loves!

LORD FOXHAM

Your friend Alicia is not of noble blood and cannot hope to marry outside her station. You shall wed Sir John Hamley and that is the end of the matter.

Lord Foxham exits.

LADY FOXHAM

Sir John, would you and Alicia please give us a moment alone? Thank you. And don't elope while my back is turned.

HAMLEY and ALICIA exit.

LADY FOXHAM

Joanna, I thought you were smart enough to know that a titled gentleman like Sir John Hamley cannot marry beneath his class. If you encouraged that match, you've been a very silly girl.

JOANNA

Oh, I had nothing to do with it. Love finds its own way, does it not?

LADY FOXHAM

No. It most certainly does not. Joanna, like it or not, you are an heiress. And that means you carry a grave responsibility.

SONG: MARRY WHOM YOU'RE TOLD

YOU HAVE SIMPLY GOT TO MARRY WHOM YOU'RE TOLD.
YOU MUST FACE THE FACT YOUR FATE HAS BEEN FORETOLD.
THEY WILL TAKE YOU TO AN ANTEROOM,
WHERE STRANGE AND TALL WILL LOOM YOUR GROOM
FROM WHOM YOU MAY NOT ANYTHING WITHHOLD.

JOANNA

Nothing, for ever and ever?

LADY FOXHAM

YOU'VE SIMPLY GOT TO MARRY WHOM YOU'RE TOLD.

JOANNA

I don't see why. Are you sure it has to be that way?

LADY FOXHAM

YOU HAVE SIMPLY GOT TO MARRY AS ARRANGED.

JOANNA

I AM SIMPLY GOING TO MARRY WHOM I CHOOSE.

LADY FOXHAM

HORSES, LANDS, AND CHATTELS WILL HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED.

JOANNA

BUT WHAT IF I REFUSE?