

A New Musical

*Sincerely Yours,*

The BLACK

ARROW

GANG

by Ross Carter

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from *The Black Arrow* by Robert Louis Stevenson.

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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, 1460, 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>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>Wedding Chant</i>	The Company
<i>What Are You Doing In My Heart?</i>	Lady Foxham
<i>It's A Wedding</i>	The Company

## DOUBLING

This play can be performed with as few as thirteen actors. Here is one possible doubling schedule:

SIR DANIEL: Person 3

SIR OLIVER: Ruffian, Soldier for Foxham

LORD FOXHAM: Knight, Sheriff, Soldier

LADY FOXHAM: Person 2, Alewife, Soldier

ALICIA: Mob, Soldier, Choir, Sir Daniel's Men, Lord Foxham's Men

HAMLEY: Appleyard, Soldier for Sir Daniel, Mob, Sentry

MYRTLE: Person 1, Mob, Soldier, Choir

GREENSLEEVE: Serf 1, Mob, Soldier

BROWNSHOE: Serf 2, Mob, Soldier, Shoreby, Sir Daniel's Men, Lord Foxham's Men

REDCAP: Serf 3, Mob, Goon 1, Soldier, Choir, Sir Daniel's Men, Lord Foxham's Men

THROGMORTON: Person 4, Goon 2, Mob, Soldier, Sir Daniel's Men, Lord Foxham's Men, Runner

Many other doubling possibilities exist. An ensemble of at least three players is highly recommended.

**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!

**SERF 1**

Yes, sir?

**KNIGHT**

Are you for Lancaster or for York?

**SERF 1**

Well, I ...

**KNIGHT**

Answer me!

*The serf flips a coin.*

**SERF 1**

Tails.

**KNIGHT**

What!

**SERF 1**

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 1**

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.

**SERF 1**

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

**SERF 2**

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?

**SERF 3**

WE'RE UNDER DURESS,  
AND FORCED TO CONFESS.

**SERF 2**

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.

**PERSON 1**

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

**PERSON 2**

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

**PERSON 3**

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

**PERSON 4**

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

*The knight accosts a serf.*



**KNIGHT**

Hey, buddy, what color is your rose?

**SERF 3**

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.

**PERSON 1**

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

**PERSON 2**

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 2**

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.

**PERSON 1**

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

**THE COMPANY**

Yewww!

**KNIGHT**

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

**SERF 2**

THERE'S ONE WAY WE COULD STOP THIS INSURRECTION,

WE'LL SIMPLY HAVE A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION.

**SERF 3**

I've got it! We'll set up an electoral college system, where everyone gets to vote but some votes 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.*

**SERF 1**

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

**SERF 2**

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

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

**SERF 2**

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.*

**SERF 1**

Here, read it for yourself.

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

**SERF 3**

Here, let me try.

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

**DICK**

Here, what's going on?

**SERF 1**

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.*

**SERF 3**

Letter for you, sir.

**DICK**

What? A letter?

**SERF 3**

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.

**SERF 1**

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!

**SERF 2**

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

**SERF 3**

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.

**SERF 1**

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

**SERF 2**

Urgent work.

**SERF 3**

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!

**SERF 1**

One question, sir, if I may?

**DICK**

Speak, peasant.

**SERF 1**

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?