

“Deception At Dale Manor”



SETUP

Story - Engaged on an important mission south of Chesterfield, Robin Hood learns of Maid Marian's capture and sends Little John and Friar Tuck to rescue her immediately. Little did they all know that the Sheriff of Nottingham was behind this fiendish trap in which the two Merry Men would soon find themselves!

Gameplay - The Player assumes the role of Little John who is accompanied by an NPC Friar Tuck, and later an NPC Robin Hood who offers limited playability. The player will hop (comedy), swim, fight with quarterstaves while on foot and on horse, fire a bow while on horseback, open stall doors, mount a horse and control a group of horses with shooting ability (see below).

1. COMIC ENTRANCE (cinematic)

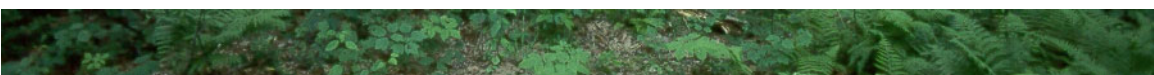
Arriving at Dale Manor where Maid Marian is purported captive, Little John surveys the scene and notes a two-story Manor house with an attached barn. “Guards at the gates, balconies and front door...” thinks Little John out loud. “Seems our spy did indeed come in handy...” he continues, as Friar Tuck beams with a smile. The two devise a plan to infiltrate the Guarded manor and reach the secret fountain passageway to the back patio.

Putting on a performance full of drama and pomp to the gate Guards, Friar Tuck wheels beside him what he describes as a badly injured and dehydrated governor beset upon by a band of thieves (“no doubt the work of the evil Robin Hood!”). Friar Tuck pleads the urgency of the situation and begs for water, “perhaps from that very fountain yonder,” inquires the Friar. The Guards seem sympathetic to their cause and allow passage to the fountain just inside the gates. Friar Tuck drags what appears to be a man-sized woolen burrito (serving as Little John's disguise) to the fountain where the two have planned to make an unnoticed plunge into the secret passageway.

2. INTO THE LION'S MOUTH

The fountain depicts three large lions spewing water from their massive mouths. The center lion is perched with its head resting on its haunches, while the two lions surrounding it stand upright. Water flows from all of their mouths. The larger, center lion's mouth is the entrance to the secret passageway. “Are you quite sure to whence this leads?” whispers Friar, quite nervous about taking the plunge. “’Tis what we paid hamsomely to know, my good Friar,” answers Little John with a muffled voice.

The player controls Little John wrapped in a heavy woolen blanket (resembling a large rolled-up rug on end) and must hop to and plunge into the fountain at the right moment. Guards are watching and patrolling, so the player must time John's descent carefully. All the while, Friar Tuck (NPC) laments over the poor governor's condition, hoping to lull the Guards into disinterest. Successful timing yields two quiet splashes followed by a curious but perplexed gate Guard approaching the fountain. Improperly timing the plunge brings an onslaught of manor Guards to fight, making the secret passageway option moot, and the front door the Merry Men's new objective (skip past to indoor fight section of PATIO TUSSLE).



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3. AQUATIC TUNNELS

Inside the secret passageway extend a simple maze of mostly-submerged tunnels that eventually lead to the back patio. The first order of business for the now-submerged Little John is to extricate himself from the soaked and uncomfortable woolen blanket (player must wiggle back and forth rigorously) while navigating the narrow, water-filled tunnel. Once free, the next objective is to find an airpocket to breathe from. The passageways branch a few times, some leading to breathable dead-ends, while a few others lead to treasure chests or some previously-stashed valuables. Eventually, the player will find their way at the bottom of the back patio well and must scale the stone ladder inside it to the surface, taking care not to alert the guard in the balcony nearby to their presence. (alerting the guard skips to guard shouting as described in the PATIO TUSSLE section below)

4. PATIO TUSSLE

As luck would have, once out of the well the soaked Friar manages the tiniest of sneezes, sending the startled guard shouting for help. A large group of melee Guards pour from the manor’s first-floor double-doors, and the Merry Men must fight their way into the Manor. Once inside, the indoor fight continues through the entryway, up the wide staircase to the second floor. Hurling guards out windows, through mirrors and over the indoor and outdoor balconies accentuates the battle towards the captive Maid Marian. “And you’re *quite sure* she’s in the Manor bedroom?” pipes the Friar as they beat back the guards. “Tis what we paid hamsomely to know, my good Friar,” answers Little John between swings of his quarterstaves. Battling the remaining guards leaves the Manor bedroom ahead with its double-doors closed. Kicking in the doors, the Merry Men are faced with a couple of guards standing defiantly between them and the bed. It appears someone is under the sheets.

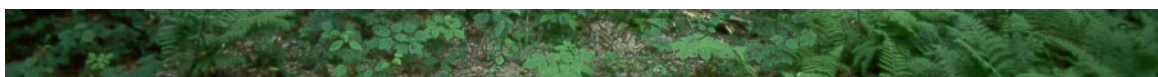
5. TRICKS AND TRAP! (cinematic)

“You won’t get out alive, you forest filth!” spits one guard. “More than I can say for the likes of *you*, sir!” exclaims the Friar with nervous bravado. “Looking for this,” cackles the other guard, stabbing the mound under the bed sheets, and all at once, the guards rush past the Merry Men, doors slamming shut behind them. “Maid Marian!” cries the Friar, running to the bed. “Alas we have failed!” he blubbers. “We’ve more pressing matters,” grumbles Little John. “What?” exclaims the Friar with a look of shock. “Get those doors open,” commands Little John as he strips the blankets off the bed to reveal a mound of pillows made to look like a body, “it’s a trap!”

6. BURNING DESIRE

At that moment torches are cast through the bedroom windows, lighting curtains and rugs on fire around the Merry Men. Triumphant voices of guards can be heard cackling with glee outside as more torches are flung into the room. If the player moves Little John towards an open window, he’ll peer cautiously out and remark, “we are set upon... and by archers” indicating that the windows are not an exit. “With the balcony on fire, what are we to do?” whimpers Friar Tuck. “No choice but to make our way downstairs through the doors whence we came”, says Little John motioning to the closed double-doors. The player must break them down by attacking them, as the bedroom is consumed in flames.

The rest of the Manor isn’t in much better shape; the staircase and walls smouldering as flames stab the smokey air. The coughing duo must make it to the kitchen where an entrance to the barn exists. To get there, a series of halls, blocked off passageways and doorways exist that the player must traverse. “Our only hope lies with the horses, if life still favors them,” exclaims Little John as they eventually reach the kitchen. “Pray this be the door,” pleads Friar Tuck as screaming horses can be heard beyond it.



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7. STALLED

Into the burning barn, the Merry Men dash to find terrified horses stuck in smoking stalls. The player must open a horse stall, make way as it bursts out (automatic) then get close and grab its reigns to ride it. By the time the player has a horse, Friar Tuck joins behind Little John on the same horse and the two are faced with falling Barn beams against a fiery background. “We are lost...” says Little John resolutely.

8. HOODED SAVIOR (cinematic)

Just then, the Barn door shatters open as Robin Hood somersaults before them, all tattered and beaten. “Robin Hood!” yells an inspired Friar Tuck. “Not too soon have I arrived from Chesterfield, my friends!” replies Robin Hood. “Come, lest we become forever mired by such hot defeat!” Robin leads the two horses together, somehow calming them amidst the flaming shambles and leaps up behind the Merry Men, one leg on each horse. “Ride with haste you two!” yells Robin Hood, as they spur their horses forward through the flaming open doorway of the barn.

9. BARN STORM (conclusion)

Immediately following their departure from the barn, a flurry of flaming arrows shower near and around them. The enemy seeks to destroy them and prevent their pursuit with a host of archers littering the Manor’s gardens and entry road. Atop the walls more archers wait. A collection of guards on the ground swing their swords hoping to prevent the band’s escape. Small fires have broken out throughout the property and combined with the giant Manor and barn flames to send a nearby field full of cattle stampeding in terror (presenting ample obstacles to avoid).

The player controls the band as a group, so movement controls the direction and speed of the horses, while combat controls Robin Hood with his bow for long range attacks, and close range quarterstaff attacks when necessary with Little John. Friar Tuck provides running commentary throughout with humor to compliment the action.



The player must avoid the crazed cattle, brush fires and destroy the archers along the pathway to insure a successful escape. The level concludes with the group crashing through the front gates to freedom. As control concludes and the group continues down the road, Robin Hood exclaims, “fear not, for we have word that the Maid Marian is en route to Nottingham at this very moment... ride on!” (next level could be the pursuit of the carriages holding her captive)

