

## ON AND OFF SCREEN

# Robin Hood: Men in Tights

## Directed by Mel Brooks (1993)



## STARRING

Cary Elwes,  
Roger Rees,  
Amy Yasbeck  
and Isaac Hayes

Two years after Kevin Costner's film Mel Brooks made a scene-by-scene parody of his film called *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*. What is a parody? Do you know of any other film parodies?

### The story on screen so far...

This is a parody of the previous scene we saw with Kevin Costner. Also here Robin is helping the villagers, with his friends Will Scarlet, Little John and Achoo, trying to teach them how to defend themselves. The results, however, are very different for this Robin.



### Over to you

**1** We are now going to look at Mel Brooks's version of the same scene we saw in On Screen. Watch the scene and answer true or false.

- The villagers are given a special uniform to wear. ☐ T ☐ F
  - They are very good with their bows and arrows. ☐ T ☐ F
  - Will Scarlet, in Robin's band, is very good on horseback. ☐ T ☐ F
  - The villagers imitate Will perfectly. ☐ T ☐ F
  - Achoo thinks the dummies<sup>1</sup> can fight better than the villagers. ☐ T ☐ F
1. **dummies:** manichini.

**2** Watch the first part of the scene again twice and tick the items of clothing given to the villagers.

- |                                  |   |   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> armour  | <input type="checkbox"/> feathered caps         | <input type="checkbox"/> shields              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sandals | <input type="checkbox"/> swords                 | <input type="checkbox"/> quivers <sup>1</sup> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jerkins | <input type="checkbox"/> capes                  | <input type="checkbox"/> boots                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jackets | <input type="checkbox"/> pantyhose <sup>2</sup> | <input type="checkbox"/> raincoats            |

1. **quivers:** custodia per frecce.

2. **pantyhose:** americano per calzamaglia.

**3** Answer the following questions.

- How does Mel Brooks's Robin Hood compare with the 1938 stereotypical version?
- Why do you think Mel Brooks made this choice?

**4** Mel Brooks is not really mocking the legend of Robin Hood but how that legend has been exploited over the years. In pairs write down some examples of how he does this. Here are some suggestions.

- Is Robin the typical heroic figure? Why? Why not? (Refer to the title of the film.)
- How does he treat the men in his band? (e.g. Will, after his example of jousting.)
- Look at the poster used for the film. What aspects of Hollywood is this mocking?