Tune 4: Shady Hollow

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Audio File 12 🎧

"Shady Hollow" uses the four notes we've learned so far: low-register C♯, B, A and G. You'll need to listen to Audio File 12 to learn the tune's rhythm. The suit stacks show you the fingerings, and each note's name appears below its suit stack. (By the way, this tune uses the A Mixolydian scale. You can download "A Brief Explanation of Modal Scales" using the Audio/PDF url on the title page of this book.)

| ○ | ♦ | ♥ | ♦ | ♥ | ♣ | ♥ | , | ♣ | ♥ | ♦ | ○ | ♦ | ♥ |
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| C♯ | B | A | B | A | G | A | | G | A | B | C♯ | B | A |

Tin Whistle Tablature

Tunes 4 through 15 will be shown in **tin whistle tablature** as well as suit code. Tablature is an instrument-specific notation system that graphically illustrates a fingering for each note. Tablature systems exist for many instruments, and have been in use at least since the 1300s.

This particular tin whistle tablature system uses a **staff**, a set of parallel horizontal lines. You may encounter others which do not, such as those that use a picture of a whistle for each note.

Have a look at the tablature for the tune we just learned, "Shady Hollow," below. Suit code and breath marks appear above the tablature staff, while the names of the notes appear below it.
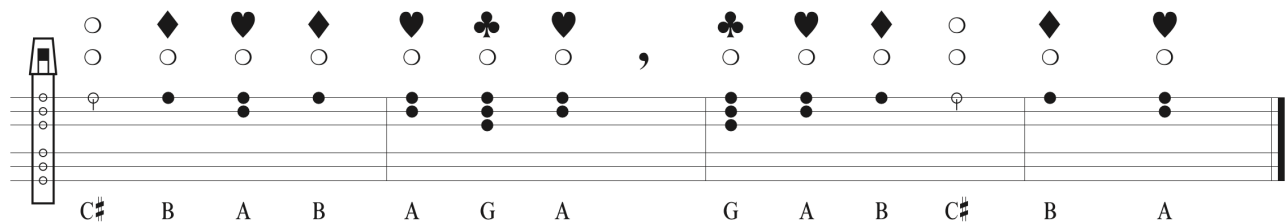
My version of tin whistle tablature features five elements:

1. The tin whistle icon, or **clef**, at the left edge of the tablature staff. Its six small circles represent the six finger holes of the whistle. The presence of this clef identifies the staff as a whistle tablature staff. (Soon we'll be using a standard music notation staff as well, which will have a different clef.)

2. Six horizontal, parallel staff lines extending to the right from the whistle clef. Notice that each staff line goes through a finger hole circle on the whistle clef. Each staff line therefore represents one of the whistle's six finger holes. The top group of three staff lines corresponds to the top hand finger holes (T1, T2 and T3), while the bottom group of three lines corresponds to the bottom hand finger holes (B1, B2 and B3).

3. Solid black dots. For each note (with the exception of C♯) you will see one or more solid black circles, or dots, centered upon the staff lines and vertically aligned with each other. (These dots are never placed between, above or below the staff lines.) Each dot indicates a closed finger hole. For example, the tune's sixth note, G, has dots upon each of the top three staff lines. This shows that you finger G by closing T1, T2 and T3 and leaving B1, B2 and B3 open. This fact is also confirmed by the note's suit stack: ♣/○.

4. A special fingering symbol — ♀ — **for the note C♯**. Since we finger C♯ by opening all six finger holes, I use this special symbol for that note, and that note only. (The suit stack ○/○ confirms this fingering.) You can see this symbol above, at the beginning (far left) of the top line of the tablature staff. Its open circle suggests an open finger hole, while its small descending line suggests that open holes extend all the way down the whistle.

5. Barlines. These are vertical lines that cut through the six-line staff and divide the music, as it flows from left to right, into time segments that are typically of equal duration. These segments of time are referred to as **measures** or **bars**. (I'll sometimes use the abbreviation "m." for "measure" and "mm." for "measures.") The double barline at the end of the tune is called a **final barline**. Its thin-then-thick design indicates the end of a piece of music.

Suit code and tablature are graphic systems that portray fingerings as simple visual patterns. Suit code accomplishes this using only five symbols. While some players will find suit code's compact simplicity a good match with their learning style, others may prefer the granular logic of tablature.