

isn't rocket science here. *(Gives him a little punch in the arm.)* Now, if you will, have your technical friend take us to the Lady Marian.

TOWN'S GUY. Of course, sir. Mr. Technical Director, if you please, transport my valiant friend, AND HIS ENORMOUS EGO, to the chamber of Lady Marian. *(Exits.)*

ROBIN *(as he follows the TOWN'S GUY)*. I don't have an enormous ego. I just happen to know I'm the most important person in this play. *(Exits.)*

*(The MERRY MEN turn the flats to form MARIAN's chamber. The sets are arranged so there is a doorway and a large window. The room is stark except for a chair and a dress dummy which has MARIAN's wedding gown on it. The wedding gown should be full-length to the floor and have long sleeves. The dummy should not have a head or arms.)*

LADY *(holds veil)*. But try this on. You'll look lovely, my lady.

MARIAN. Oh, who cares. Soon I shall be forced to marry a festering wart. That will make me Mrs. Festering Wart. Then, he and I shall have a passel of festering little warts. On our mailbox it will say "The Warts" and our Christmas cards will be signed, "Brightest Holiday Greetings, the Wart Family." So who cares how I look, I have nothing to live for. *(Plops herself down in the chair.)*

LADY *(puts veil on dummy)*. Somebody's cranky. *(There is a "boink" sound that indicates an arrow has just been shot into the outside of the window. The LADY goes to the window, pulls out the arrow that has a letter at-*

*tached to it. She shows it to MARIAN.)* Oh, Lady Marian, a letter has just arrived for you...air-row mail. *(Laughs hysterically at her own joke, looks at MARIAN, gets no response.)* Boy, when you're having a bad hair day, the whole world suffers.

MARIAN. Please do read it, Lady.

LADY. As you wish. "Let it be known that His Royal Highness, hereby decrees an archery tournament shall take place one week from this Saturday. All eligible archers are commanded to take part. The winner shall receive one thousand gold pieces and the hand of Lady Marian in marriage."

MARIAN. What! Let me see that. *(LADY hands her the letter.)*

LADY. This is wonderful! You may not have to marry the Sheriff of Nottingham after all!

MARIAN. Don't let this fool you, Lady. This is just a clever ploy by THE EVIL PRINCE JOHN.

MEN *(offstage)*. BOO, HISS! BOO, HISS! *(LADY looks around in confusion to see where the "Boo Hiss" came from.)*

MARIAN. Now he can justify my hand in marriage to the Sheriff. The Sheriff is by far the best archer in all the land. His record is perfect, he's never been beaten by anyone. He is sure to win. This way, it will look all quite innocent to the people of England when the Sheriff elects the Prince king. Nothing has changed, I'm still doomed. *(Plops herself down in the chair. Hands LADY the arrow and message.)*

*(ROBIN HOOD appears in the window. He waves to the LADY.)*

LADY (*spotting ROBIN*). Why, Lady Marian, there's a Robin on the windowsill.

MARIAN (*stands and sees ROBIN*). Oh, look! It's Robin Hood! Bold and courageous desperado of Sherwood and reputable defender of the underfed!

(*ROBIN enters the room.*)

LADY (*to ROBIN*). Well, I see we're into titles.

MARIAN. Lady, will you stand watch outside my door? If the good outlaw Robin Hood is found in my chamber, there could be an unpleasant situation.

LADY (*to MARIAN*). I don't like the sound of this.

ROBIN. You can trust in me, good lady.

LADY. Yes, sir. (*To MARIAN.*) I still don't like the sound of this. (*Exits with arrow and message. MARIAN and ROBIN shyly smile at each other.*)

MARIAN. So, Robin, how art thou?

ROBIN. Very well. And...how art thou?

MARIAN. Oh, I art fine. Well, actually, I'm about to become Mrs. Wart, but aside from that, I art fine.

ROBIN. Good. Did you receive my message?

MARIAN. Oh! That was from you?

ROBIN. Yes! Good news to you, no doubt.

MARIAN. Oh, don't be fooled, Robin! This is just a scheme to deceive the people of England. The Sheriff is the best archer in all the land. He will win and I will be condemned to marry him. All is black and my dreams, once bright, spiral into the murky abyss of misery, despondency and tragic woe. (*Upbeat with a smile.*) But thanks for asking anyway. (*Plops herself down in the chair.*)

ROBIN. My dear damsel in distress, you have been deceived. The Sheriff is indeed a master archer, but he is only the *second* best in all the land. Stands before you now, the winner of the tournament and your future husband.

MARIAN. You? The greatest archer in the land?

ROBIN. Well, Marian, I am not a person who likes to brag...

MEN (*offstage*). YEAH, RIGHT!

ROBIN (*shoots a nasty look offstage*). ...but when it comes to archery, there is no man better than me! With my trusty bow and arrow, I can split a pea, on the back of a flea, five hundred feet away! (*Under his breath.*) As long as it's during daylight.

MARIAN. Can this be? Is there hope for happiness yet?

ROBIN. Yes, my love, 'tis true. There is hope for happiness yet.

(*They draw close about to kiss as the LADY IN WAITING bursts into the room.*)

LADY (*in a panic, screams*). LADY MARIAN!

ROBIN (*annoyed*). Timing, dear girl. You must work on your timing.

LADY. But this is urgent! Robin's been seen! The Sheriff and his guards are searching the castle and they're headed this way. (*Grabs ROBIN's arm and tugs away at him.*) OH, WHAT SHALL WE DO?

ROBIN (*as he's being shaken*). Prozac comes to mind!\*

MARIAN. Robin, if you are found it will mean certain death for us all!

\* This line may be cut if questionable to be performed by a school or young cast.

LADY. Whoa. Wait just a fortnight. Nobody said anything to me about death when I took this job.

MARIAN. Lady, please, there is no time. Watch for the Sheriff. Quick, Robin, to the window!

LADY (*throws her arms in the air*). I knew this was going to happen! Did I listen to my parents and go to law school? NOOOOO! I had to be a big shot working at the castle!

ROBIN (*begins to climb out the window*). Oh no! The guards are below!

LADY (*to ROBIN*). "You can trust in me, good lady." And what good did it do me? Thanks to you, I'm gonna be floatin' in a moat somewhere!

ROBIN. Are you quite finished?

LADY. Oh, I'm just getting started!

ROBIN. Marian, I must find a place to hide! (*Looks around searching for a place to hide. Notices there is no place. He picks up the small chair and holds it in front of his face.*)

LADY (*at the doorway*). Lady Marian, the Sheriff's one chamber over! Oh my heart. My heart is giving out.

ROBIN (*realizing this will not be inconspicuous, puts the chair down*). Something tells me when playing hide and seek, this is not the first room one chooses.

LADY (*panics; looks out the doorway*). LADY MARIAN, THE SHERIFF APPROACHES!

MARIAN. Quick, Robin, stand behind here! (*Points to dummy. ROBIN stands behind the dummy and puts his head on the dummy's neck. MARIAN puts the veil on ROBIN's head.*)

LADY. OHHHHH! I'M DYING! I'M DYING! (*Looks up and talks to heaven.*) What's that, Grandma? Come toward the light?

MARIAN. Lady, help!

(*The SHERIFF and GUARDS, wearing black tunics and black hoods with the eyes cut out of them, burst into the room.*)

SHERIFF. All right, Marian! Where is he?

MARIAN. Doesn't thou even knowest enough to knock? What were thou brought up in...a barn?

SHERIFF. Don't play coy with me. I'm on to your tricks. That blackguard, Robin Hood, has been seen about the castle. My sources say he was scaling the wall to your window.

MARIAN. I have no idea what you mean, you walking, talking skin abrasion.

SHERIFF. Why on earth do you insist on protecting him? Please, what could you possibly see in that loser? (*ROBIN looks at the SHERIFF and puts his hands [holding the sleeves of the wedding gown] on his hips in disgust at that remark.*) I mean, think about it. He's completely uncivilized. The man lives in the woods. His entire social circle consists of field mice and ticks. (*Stands closer to the dummy.*) However, your future could be quite bright with someone like me, my sweet. You'd have wealth beyond your grandest dreams! But taking up with the likes of Robin Hood would mean you'd have to live a life below you. (*Stands directly next to ROBIN.*) You would be one of the vile and worthless poor. And