

thought wrong! As you will see, they were not expecting some surprise news from the Lady Marian.

*(TOWN'S GUY exits. Lights up on the throne room. PRINCE JOHN sits on his throne and the SHERIFF stands next to him with a clipboard in his hands. The FAWNING LADIES are sitting. One is reading a magazine, one is meditating, one is painting her toenails and another is plucking her eyebrows.)*

PRINCE. Oh Sheriff, Sheriff, it will not be long now. Soon, I shall become king and England will be all ours!

*(LITTLE JOHN, still scattering, runs across stage screaming, and off, behind the flats, his arms are flailing as usual. He should be "outside the castle" and able to be seen through the windows in the flats.)*

LITTLE. AHHHHH! *(The PRINCE and SHERIFF look at him as he passes, they pause a moment.)*

PRINCE. Who was that?

SHERIFF. I don't know. But that was quite a feat considering we're in a tower. But, as you were saying, Highness, I agree! It looks as though all our hard work is about to pay off! *(FAWNING LADIES applaud with glee.)*

GUARD. Excuse me, Your Highness! Urgent news! Robin Hood has escaped!

FAWNING LADIES *(gasp)*. OH!

SHERIFF. What! The knave escaped! This cannot be!

PRINCE. Guard, bring the Lady Marian to me at once.

GUARD. Yes, Your Highness. *(Exits.)*

~~PRINCE. Worry not, Sheriff! You know he'll be here tomorrow for the archery tournament. And mark my words, he will be captured. We just have to take the proper precautions to make the Lady Marian remain extremely unavailable to him.~~

~~*(MARIAN and GUARD enter.)*~~

MARIAN. You sent for me, oh pimple on the face of humanity?

PRINCE. Yes, Marian, I sent for you. Robin Hood has escaped.

MARIAN. Oh rapture and extreme satisfaction! Robin Hood, holder of my heart, free! Now, he will surely rescue me and save me from the evil clutches of *(to PRINCE and SHERIFF)* Scab-King and his faithful sidekick, Blotch.

PRINCE. Don't count on it, dear girl. Until the tournament tomorrow, you will stay here, in the tower, heavily guarded at all times. We must see to it that you marry the Sheriff so I can become king!

SHERIFF *(with evil glee in his voice)*. Yes, darling, it will be a grand party. All the most important people in the world will be our guests. See, I have the seating arrangements for the reception right here. *(Hands her the clipboard.)*

MARIAN *(glances at the clipboard)*. Oh, for goodness sakes, can't you do anything right? Look at the people at table three.

SHERIFF *(looks over her shoulder at clipboard)*. What's wrong with table three?

MARIAN. You've got Genghis Khan sitting next to the Pope. Oh, that'll go over real big.

SHERIFF. Then where do you suggest I put him?

MARIAN. Well... Genghis Khan is a barbarian whose face strikes fear in the hearts of men. Sit him next to your sister... they'll have a lot in common!

SHERIFF. Don't pick on my sister!

PRINCE. So as you see, dear niece, you haven't a choice. All the final preparations have been made for the wedding. (*PRINCE points to FAWNING LADIES. With big smiles, three hold up white, accordion paper wedding bells and one holds up a "JUST MARRIED" sign.*)

MARIAN (*to LADIES*). I wish you all... split ends.

FAWNING LADIES (*in horror, they drop their bells and grab their hair*). AHHHHHH!

PRINCE. Appreciate our hard work! You and the Sheriff will be wed the moment after he wins the archery tournament!

MARIAN. Well yes, I imagine that would be your idea of a happy ending. But you and the Sheriff have overlooked one small detail. The Sheriff is only the *second* best archer in all the land. It is Robin Hood who is the very best archer in all the land. Why, five hundred feet away, he can split a hair growing out of a crusty mole on your little toe!

SHERIFF. What is it with you and skin conditions?

MARIAN. Robin Hood will defeat you! Then, England will once again belong to the people. And boy, oh, boy, are they going to be mad at you!

PRINCE. NO MORE! GUARD, TAKE HER AWAY!

MARIAN. May you both itch in places you cannot reach!  
(*Curtseys and exits with GUARD.*)

PRINCE. Curses! Curses! Robin Hood the best archer in all the land!

SHERIFF. She's lying, Your Highness! Let the tournament take place. I'm sure I can beat him.

PRINCE. No, Sheriff! We cannot risk it! Everything we have accomplished is at stake! If Robin Hood wins, we are doomed! We must think of another plan. (*Looks at the SHERIFF a moment.*) Tell me, what else are you good at?

SHERIFF. Gee, I don't know offhand.

PRINCE. Can you fence?

SHERIFF. Not really.

PRINCE. Joust?

SHERIFF. Not well.

PRINCE. Come now, certainly there must be something else you can do.

SHERIFF. Well, I don't mean to brag, but I have been known to make a mean loaf of bread.

FAWNING LADIES (*big smiles*). BREAD!

PRINCE. Oh. Well, that's very commendable, Sheriff. But at this point of the story I do think a bake-off might be a tad anti-climactic, don't you?

SHERIFF. Wait! Yes! There is something at which I know I am the very, very best. In this sport, I am the incontestable champion! I have entered countless tournaments and have always won! Why, Your Majesty, I know Robin Hood could never compete with me! I am sure of it!

PRINCE. Wonderful! I knew you wouldn't let me down, Sheriff! Come! Tell me all about your secret talent as we make the necessary arrangements!