

(As the lights dim, the SHERIFF and PRINCE exit with the FAWNING LADIES following. The MERRY MEN, silhouetted, enter and change the scene to Sherwood Forest. TOWN'S GUY enters.)

TOWN'S GUY. Ah, plans, plots and intrigue. It seems that evil never rests. And so, good folk, we return again to Sherwood Forest. Just when Robin and the Merry Men thought things were finally going right, a shocking message had just been sent their way.

(The MERRY MEN are using LITTLE JOHN as a table. ALLAN has a Yahtzee dice roller. As lights come up he exclaims.)

ALLAN. YAHTZEE!

(ROBIN enters running.)

ROBIN. Another bull's-eye! That's my six-hundredth in a row! The Prince and the Sheriff will rue the day they came against Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest. I am unbeatable. *(Holds up his bow and strikes a heroic pose.)*

* TOWN'S GUY. Robin, a shocking message has just been sent your way! *(Holds up message.)*

ROBIN. Not now, Town's Guy. I am posing. *(Smiles a heroic smile.)*

TOWN'S GUY. But this is really important.

ROBIN. Nothing could be more important than striking bull's-eye after bull's-eye!

TOWN'S GUY. Robin, they've changed the sport for the tournament.

* OR TOWN'S GAL

ROBIN *(looks at TOWN'S GUY)*. What?!

TOWN'S GUY. Listen! *(Reads from paper.)* "His Royal Highness hereby decrees that the game for the tournament be changed. What was once to be an archery tournament, will now be a battle of bowling."

ROBIN *(drops bow and arrow and grabs the message)*. WHAT?!?! Give me that! *(Looks over the paper.)* BOWLING! This is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard! We're in medieval England! You fence, or you joust! You don't bowl!

WILL. Well, boss, it looks like the times, they are a-changin'.

ROBIN. But I can't be seen bowling! I'm a great character of literature! Great characters of literature don't bowl!

ALLAN. Well, sir, maybe you can be the first. Then, other great characters of literature will follow in your footsteps.

ROBIN. Oh, right! Yes, I'm sure someday you'll open up a novel and find Madame Bovary picking up a seven-ten split at Flaubert's* Bowl-o-Rama! I DON'T THINK SO!

TUCK. My son, stay calm. Remember, good will always triumph over evil.

ROBIN. Friar, I don't think you understand. I can't be seen bowling because... *(Looks down at the floor.)* I don't know how to bowl.

MEN *(gasp, then, to AUDIENCE, in unison)*. OH, SHOCK AND DISBELIEF!

ROBIN. It looks as though I am going to fail the Lady Marian and the good people of England. I have fought so hard to help the poor and now I face defeat. True, I

* Pronounced: "flo-bear."

may be brave, trustworthy and kind...but alas, Merry Men, I am no bowler. (*Sits on the ground and puts his head into his hands.*)

TOWN'S GUY. Ah, Robin, things may not be as desperate as they seem.

ROBIN. Have you a suggestion, Town's Guy?

TOWN'S GUY. Better yet, I think I have a solution to the problem.

ROBIN. Then speak, I listen with both ears.

TOWN'S GUY. Well, the tournament was changed because the Sheriff and Prince discovered that you are the best archer in all the land, no doubt.

ROBIN. No doubt.

TOWN'S GUY. So they picked something that the Sheriff is the very best at, no doubt.

ROBIN. No doubt.

TOWN'S GUY. So they chose bowling because the Sheriff is the very best bowler in all the land, no doubt.

ROBIN (*getting aggravated*). NO DOUBT! AND YOUR POINT IS...?

TOWN'S GUY. My point is, they missed one small detail in choosing a new sport for the tournament. The Sheriff of Nottingham may be a master bowler, but he is not the very best bowler in all the land... (*Pause.*) I am! (*They all turn and look at the TOWN'S GUY.*)

ROBIN. What? You?! The greatest bowler in all the land?

TOWN'S GUY. Yep!

ROBIN. But how?

TOWN'S GUY. Well, I was considered one of the lowly poor. I was never allowed to play on any of the royal leagues. The Sheriff and Prince have no idea that I am the finest bowler there is!

TUCK. This is wonderful news! Robin, the Town's Guy can enter the tournament. He'll win, give the gold to the poor, and Marian won't have to marry the Sheriff.

TOWN'S GUY. That's right! She'll marry me! (*ROBIN shoots a look of death to the TOWN'S GUY.*) It's a joke!

ROBIN. Swell. You'll win the tournament, save the poor, marry Marian and live happily ever after. Well, I guess I'm not the most important person in this play anymore. (*To TOWN'S GUY.*) You are! Congratulations! Well, I won't get in your way. Farewell to you all. (*Begins to exit.*)

WILL. Boss! You don't mean to tell us that you're quitting!

ALLAN. How can you quit now when we've come this far?

TUCK. The men are right, Robin! You can't abandon all of us who count on you.

ROBIN. For shame! For shame on me! You're right! I am not a quitter! I am Robin Hood, the most popular person in all the land! I shall not rest until England is safe once again. You should never give up the fight if you're fighting for what's right! (*Looks to AUDIENCE, points to them and says quickly.*) Did you all get that? Good. (*To TOWN'S GUY.*) Town's Guy, you must teach me how to bowl. Teach me now. That's an order.

TOWN'S GUY. No, Robin, I won't.

ROBIN. What do you mean, you won't? I said that's an order.

TOWN'S GUY. Robin, I'm your friend. You shouldn't order me around. If you want my help you can ask for it nicely. Because just because someone is popular, doesn't mean they can order their friends around and boss them

all over the place. (*Looks to AUDIENCE, points to them and says quickly.*) Did you all get that? (*Directly into ROBIN's face.*) GOOD!

ROBIN (*after a pause*). You're right. I have treated you badly. Town's Guy, will you please do me the honor of teaching me how to bowl? (*ROBIN extends his hand in friendship.*)

TOWN'S GUY. It will be my pleasure, Robin Hood of Sherwood. (*They shake hands.*)

MEN (*to AUDIENCE, in unison*). HOORAY!

ROBIN. See, Merry Men? Even the most popular person in all the land must be humble at times. And as we all know, I possess thousands of praiseworthy qualities. But out of them all...HUMILITY IS ONE OF MY FINEST! (*MERRY MEN applaud ROBIN. He waves to them in acknowledgment.*) Yes, thank you! Huzzah, huzzah!

TOWN'S GUY (*to AUDIENCE*). He hasn't grasped the point yet. But hey, it's a start.

ROBIN. Merry Men, I have a plan! I shall disguise myself and go to the tournament. Then, when I win, I shall claim Lady Marian's hand and declare the Prince a traitor! At that point, I will need your help. But until that moment, men, you are to (*stresses this point*) ...hide in the trees.

MEN (*in unison*). Hide in the trees?

ROBIN. Yes, hide in the trees. (*Exit.*)

TOWN'S GUY. Robin, it's time to get to work. We only have one day to make you the greatest bowler in all the land.

ROBIN. Right you are, teacher! To work! (*Exit.*)

TOWN'S GUY. Robin Hood wasn't one to back down from a challenge! He was determined to conquer the

sport of bowling before dawn. (*The sounds of bowling pins being knocked down are heard.*) As time passed, Robin listened carefully, memorized my every instruction. He never took a break in the grueling hours of practice. He embedded every rule of the game in his mind.

(*Bowling sounds stop. ROBIN walks into the light and stands next to the TOWN'S GUY. The following exchange goes quickly.*)

ROBIN. Town's Guy! I have mastered the game of bowling! I'm sure I know exactly what I'm talking about! I seize my rolling globe...

TOWN'S GUY. You take your bowling ball...

ROBIN. Point it midway...

TOWN'S GUY. Aim it center...

ROBIN. Spin it down the aisle...

TOWN'S GUY. Roll it down the lane...

ROBIN. And restrain it from the sewer.

TOWN'S GUY. Stay out of the gutter.

ROBIN. Precisely! (*Calls to MERRY MEN offstage.*) Merry Men, it is official! I am an expert bowler.

MEN (*offstage in unison*). HOORAY!

ROBIN. Now watch and marvel as I knock down all the bobby pins! (*Exits.*)

TOWN'S GUY (*yells after him*). BOWLING PINS! (*To AUDIENCE.*) It's going to be a long night. Mr. Technical Director, if you please, make the hands of time spin quickly. Bring us to the castle and the day of the tournament.