

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Will Gamwell (later Scarlet)

Close, loyal friend to Robin Hood. Quick-witted and funny, he likes to drink, be merry, and make light of everything.

Robin Hood

Hero of the story, believes in justice and is a friend of all good people. He helps the poor by stealing from the rich. Brave and confident. He is charming and constantly flirts with the ladies.

Marian Harper

Pretty and strong girl, knows how to use a bow and arrow well. Not easily alarmed. She is very confident and observant. Lady in waiting to the Queen and of noble blood.

The Sheriff of Nottingham

Arrogant, proud, mean and untrustworthy. His only motivation is money. Power hungry, and the temper of a child.

Bishop of Hereford

Cowardly and self righteous. He claims he is pious and likes to hear himself talk. He is somewhat annoying to those around him, however he is rich and powerful due to his position. Gullible.

King John

Consumed with power and filling his pockets with money, he is petty, spiteful and cruel. He thinks he is clever and is never wrong. Cares only for himself.

Little John

Large bearded man one of the "Merry Men" who uses a quarterstaff (huge stick) as a weapon. He is a strong fighter and a man of few words. He may seem scary when you first see him, but deep down has a soft heart.

Much

A miller, one of the "Merry Men," ordinary but eager to please. Not a super bright fellow, falls for a lot of the jokes that are made at his expense, but eventually catches up. He always makes cliché jokes that aren't amusing to those around him. He is pleased with this.

Arthur-a-Bland

A tanner, one of the "Merry Men," he is aware of his surroundings. He is positive in every situation and confident that he is on the right side.

Meg Scathelocke

Hostess of the inn, one of the "Merry Men" she is fully part of the cause. She is also aware of what is happening around her. She is very decisive. She deals with many drunk customers and knows how to handle herself.

Alan-a-Dale

Engaged to his love Ellen Deriwold. As an entertainer he is creative and is witty, and he knows how to read the crowd,. His goal throughout is to rescue Ellen from the sheriff, and he remains positive and confident that he will succeed.

Ellen Deirwold

A pretty woman engaged to Alan-a-Dale, she is practical as well as strong. She is mentally tough and doesn't give up even in the midst of capture.

Queen Eleanor of Aquitane

Royalty, mother of KING John, she is tough but fair she can loosen up and enjoys spontaneous adventure. She is kind and gentle and appreciates the people of her Kingdom. She doesn't take any strife from her son and is always one step ahead of the child-like mind of her son.

Age 40-70

Friar Tuck

A pious friar who is fat and a little slow. He is easily tricked, being that he believes the best in people. Has a good sense of humor even about his own weight. He is kind and means well.

The Prioress of Kirklees

Robin Hood's cousin, she is self-centered and not as honest as Robin with their community. She is easily bribed and gives into selfish tendency more often than not.

Guy of Gisbourne

Large, brutish assassin. Rough and strong. He is not sentimental about anything. He is large and always scheming. He will only work if he is paid and will always find another way to raise the cost. Is known for always "getting his man". However good at being an assassin he is, he is not very educated.

WILL, ROBIN, MARIAN (*WILL and ROBIN hide in the bushes. MARIAN enters hunts for deer.*)

ROBIN: Who is she? Do you know her?

WILL: Just another poor Saxton looking for breakfast.

ROBIN: Aye, she's different though. Think I'd like to meet her.

WILL: Oh no. Not "The Rescue".

ROBIN: "The rescue," I should appear in the best possible light, don't you think?

(*ROBIN hides. WILL draws his sword and leaps out with a roaring voice of a villain from a melodrama.*)

WILL: AH-HAAAA!!! A beautiful maiden! And she's alone!! What luck! Satan must be smiling today! How fortunate for me! How unfortunate for you! You will mourn the day you met up with the Baron Hardankles!!

MARIAN: (*Alert, but cool.*) What if I don't feel like mourning? (*Unfazed by this, WILL strikes a bold pose.*)

WILL: Yaaaahhhh!!!

MARIAN: What are you doing?

WILL: (*Different pose.*) Ya-haa!!

MARIAN: Would you mind telling me what you're doing?

WILL: (*Dropping the character a moment.*) What? (*Back into his pose.*) Well! I'll tell you what I'm doing, if you so want to know so much!! Now will I, the Baron Hardankles, pluck me forth a fresh flower of Saxon maidenhead--hood!! Say your prayers!! For who will save you now?!

MARIAN: Go ahead and try. I'm waiting.

WILL: (*Dropping character, blankly.*) You're waiting? Waiting for what?

MARIAN: Go ahead and pluck, if you're going to pluck.

WILL: (*Quietly confused.*) Yes, but you really should resist---

ROBIN: (*Leaps valiantly into scene from the other direction, with an equal amount of ham.*) Hold, oh thou Norman piglet! Ravish not this fair maiden! For I have three feet of cold steel shall make puree of thee!

MARIAN: Let him come, it's fine.

ROBIN: (*Quickly.*) No, it's no trouble really---

WILL: Saxon dog!! Who art thou, that thou wouldst cross me in battle so?!

ROBIN: Vile chicken-headed thing!! My name shalt be thy last knowledge in life!! I am he whom men call ... Robin Hood!!! (*WILL and ROBIN fake fight.*)

ROBIN: You're dead---Yes! (*WILL dies. ROBIN turns to Marian.*)

ROBIN: He'll trouble you no more, fair Saxon maid.

MARIAN: He didn't trouble me at all---Didn't even touch me. All he did was yell a lot.

ROBIN: Yes, frightening. Once again I'm forced to take a life---Yea, a wretched, depraved, meaningless Norman life--- but A life, nonetheless.

MARIAN: There's no blood on your sword.

ROBIN: What?

MARIAN: There's no blood on your sword. It's clean.

ROBIN: (*Quickly looks at the sword. Slowly, as if personally offended.*) Why the bloodless wretch ... (*To Marian.*) Typical Norman, wouldn't you know? Thinner than water. (*Quickly putting away his sword.*)

MARIAN: Well, I think I've had enough entertainment for one day. Thank you, good Riding Hood.

ROBIN: Robin.

MARIAN: Riding Robin, yes, Good day.

ROBIN: Well, I can hardly let you go unescorted. I didn't save that pretty neck to have it slit as soon as you enter the wood. (*MARIAN starts walking. ROBIN follows after her.*)

MARIAN: Oh, but I've been so looking forward to that. Now how am I to have my pretty neck slit if you keep following after me? Or my eyes put out---

ROBIN: Lovely eyes---

MARIAN: Or my head chopped off---

ROBIN: A magnificent head---

MARIAN: (*Turns, drawing her sword in a single smooth move, pointing it at Robin's chest.*) It should be. It's the head of a Norman. (*MARIAN slowly backs the startled ROBIN up.*)

MARIAN: A wretched, depraved, meaningless Norman... Which is what I happen to be.

KING John, SHERIFF

KING: Oh dear ... Well we certainly know there are more serious matters. For instance in the area of tax collection. We seem to be meeting a little resistance here, are we not?

SHERIFF: Why, there's not a county in the realm---

KING: No, we are not meeting a little resistance, we are meeting a lot of resistance.

SHERIFF: Since the last increase, tax collection has become the single greatest expense in the Kingdom---

KING: You're telling *me* that? You're telling *me* that? You're barely breaking even---You're telling *me* that?

SHERIFF: I'm telling you because you don't seem to be aware of the cost and difficulty involved---

KING: Nottinghamshire is breaking records in tax, is it not?

SHERIFF: I haven't charted the rest of the Kingdom! I have more important things to do!

KING: Nothing! Nothing is more important to me than income! (*Calming from this brief outburst.*) Four years ago when my brother the Lion-Hearted had the good sense to die, he also had the good sense to place the crown on my head.

Unfortunately he neglected to give me the majesty that goes with it.... I look in the mirror and I see a crown, but do I see a king? No. At least not while my mother lives. Eleanor has not only more power and glamour, she also holds sway over the barons. Without money, and without the support of the barons I cannot execute my greatest dream; The invasion of France. Only then will the true King of England stare back at me from the mirror. My mother, I'll deal with later ... The taxes ... we'll deal with now, my Lord Sheriff...

SHERIFF: You know what Nottinghamshire's like. We have much more than our share of troublemakers.

ROBIN, LITTLE JOHN

ROBIN HOOD enters and approaches a log or small bridge. ROBIN is about to cross when a large, serious, bearded man carrying a large stick JOHN--- enters from the other side, blocking the way.

ROBIN: Hup! Hold on. You there good fellow. Why don't you hold a second there and let me cross before you mount the log, there's a good lad. *(ROBIN takes a step onto the log and LITTLE JOHN takes one also.)*

ROBIN: Hup hup hup! Excuse me! Good gentleman! Do you see what you're doing? Now ordinarily, I'd be only too happy to sit here and take a nap while you waddle along, but as it is, I'm heading to the Blue Boar Inn hoping to find a certain lady there. You know what they say about a lady-in waiting---They *don't*. *(ROBIN laughs a bit, but then clears his throat when the serious LITTLE JOHN fails to react.)* Yes, well, if you don't mind---*(HE takes a step, LITTLE JOHN does also.)*

LITTLE JOHN: Ugh!

ROBIN: *(Stopping again.)* A man of few words. Are you a man of action? Then go away. Go.
(LITTLE JOHN doesn't move.)

ROBIN: Oh, I get it! Perhaps you're a poor dumb fellow! Can you speak? *(As to a child.)* Speak...Speak... Come on, little fella'...Hm. Are you deaf too? Is that it? Ah, ya poor, poor animal. Well, this is your lucky day, for Robin Hood has taken pity on you. And I'm digging deep in my pockets to come up with---*(Pulls a coin out of his pocket.)* Tuppence! Oooooo---Tuppence! Ahhhhh! *(ROBIN tosses it across to the other side.)* Get the coin. Fetch the coin, little fella', ya stupid animal.

LITTLE JOHN: *(Slowly, grimly.)* I'm not deaf... I'm not dumb... I won't go... And--- *(HE spits.)* ...I spit on your tuppence. *(Pause.)*

ROBIN: I see, oh thou mighty oaf---oak, I meant to say. Well, this is a problem, isn't it, You won't back off the log?

LITTLE JOHN: Mm!

ROBIN: What that a yes or a no?

LITTLE JOHN: I'd much rather you step aside, little man. I've had more than enough sport for one day.

ROBIN: How about a little archery? *(ROBIN puts an arrow in bow. LITTLE JOHN studies this action calmly.)*

LITTLE JOHN: What are you going to do? Shoot me with your bow and arrow?

ROBIN: *(Looking at his bow a moment.)* Well, yes, I suppose I'll have to.

LITTLE JOHN: *(A deep gravelly chuckle.)* Now, isn't that right sporting of ya. Shoot a man with a bow and arrow who's armed only with a quarterstaff. *(A grim laugh.)*

ROBIN: A what? Oh, ya mean your stick. Is that what that is?

LITTLE JOHN: Yes. Feel it with your head.

ROBIN: *(Chuckling.)* No no, that's alright, thank you.

LITTLE JOHN: Go ahead, I insist.

ROBIN: *(Still chuckling, nodding his head.)* All right. All right, my poor friend. I suppose I can't just shoot you. Never let it be said Robin Hood's not a fair man. Wait here a moment.

(LITTLE JOHN waits calmly while ROBIN rushes into the wood. We hear him humming a tune while HE runs about in the bushes.)

LITTLE JOHN: Should I sit down for a while?

ROBIN: *(Off.)* Coming, slow witted dull thing! *(HE rushes back in with a rough quarterstaff of his own.)* There! Now we can--- Hold on a moment here... did you take a step forward?

LITTLE JOHN: I did not move an inch.

ROBIN: *(Patronizingly.)* C'mon, you little elf, tell the truth now. You did move forward just a little, didn't you.

LITTLE JOHN: *(Slow burn.)* Call you me a liar, you?

ROBIN: Call you me a liar, you... if you attack me, the way you attack the King's English, I'd better be on my toes.

ALAN, ELLEN

We find the inn in its usual spirit of good cheer with laughter, drinking and dancing. ALAN, a young minstrel, provides the music on a lute, while beautiful young ELLEN, his fiancée, dances.

ALAN: Let's slip away a bit, Ellen, I'll play you a tune.

ELLEN: (*Chuckling.*) Ohhhh no. We'll be married in a week, Alan. You can wait for *that* tune.

ALAN: No. I mean, yes--- No, that wasn't what I meant---

ELLEN: Father warned me about you traveling minstrels.

ALAN: (*Moves in close for a kiss.*) Well, I won't be traveling anymore.

ELLEN: (*Stops him with a finger to his lips.*) Oh, Alan, why can't you get a real job? Like a miller or a tanner.

ALAN: Ellen, why just a moment ago a fellow was telling me pretty soon minstrels will be worth a fortune around here--- Every lyric dropping like gold from their lips.

ELLEN: Fellow? What fellow?

ALAN: Good little fellow--- Right there. (*Pointing across the way.*) Calls himself Lord Croop.

ELLEN: Oh, Alan, that's Much the miller. He means well, but... well, he's given to---

ALAN: Great imagination?

ELLEN: (*Studying him with amusement.*) Yes.

ALAN: Well, that's what you need, Ellen. Imagination. That's what gets you places. For instance now the barons are all raising their rents, right? That gives 'em more money for entertainment, right. And who do they hire for that entertainment?... Minstrels!

ELLEN: And who is that pays the rent in the first place?

ALAN: (*Pause. ALAN realizes it's them. HE thinks a moment.*) Well, that's all right! With the extra work, we'll be able to pay the increased rent.

ELEANOR (QUEEN), KING John

Part of the Royal Palace Garden, London. QUEEN ELEANOR is working her garden, pulling up weeds with a small tool. KING JOHN enters, sees her, and ducks mischievously out of sight. HE sneaks up behind her.

KING: Boo! (*ELEANOR doesn't react, but just keeps weeding. SHE is always calm and in control.*)

ELEANOR: Whenever I hear someone moving lightly I just assume it's you.

KING: (*Chuckling.*) Ahhhh my very favorite mother.

ELEANOR: My least favorite son. What do you want?

KING: What do I want? Is that a way to greet a king? What do I want?

ELEANOR: (*Turning to him.*) What do you want?

KING: (*Chuckling.*) Oh, a marvelous delightful sense of humor you do have, Mum, dear Mum. Why you're really as bright and fresh as the flowers in your garden. How *do* you do it? Especially at your age.

ELEANOR: Weed!

KING: I beg your pardon?

ELEANOR: It's not so much a question of growing flowers as it is destroying weeds. The one negates the other.

KING: (*Stares at her from a distance. Pause.*) I see. (*Walking again, sniffing flowers.*) If I didn't know better, I'd swear we were talking about something other than gardening.

ELEANOR: Nonsense, John, it's all just weeding. Every now and then you get one tough bugger who refuses to come up.

KING: Very well, I'll play. Whatever do you do then, Mother dear?

ELEANOR: Only one thing *to* do. (*SHE digs the tool into the ground, demonstrating.*) Grab him right by the bulbs... and yank! (*SHE violently rips the weed out. JOHN's playful attitude suddenly drops.*)

KING: I think the gardening lesson is over--- How quickly I tire of games.

ELEANOR: Oh, you think these to be games? I have cards up my sleeve I haven't even thought of using yet. You'd better quit while you're ahead.

KING: I've allowed the barons yet another tax increase. You know, I think they're beginning to like me more and more each day.

ELEANOR: You can give them free cows and shine their pottery for them, and the loyalty they feel for me will only grow stronger. Something you don't understand, John.

KING: (*Irritated at this.*) No. No, I don't understand it. Lion-Heart's dead, *you're* about to be.

ELEANOR: My, what sentiment. (*Pointedly, low-voiced.*) Don't count on it, John.

KING: Oh no--- I'm not going to kill you, Mother. The barons would never forgive me.

ELEANOR: You old sentimentalist.

TUCK, ROBIN

TUCK: (*Rising from the ground.*) Who's that spying upon me? You come out of there at once!

ROBIN: (*Crawls out of hiding.*) Good day, Friar.

TUCK: (*Drawing his sword.*) Why you brash scalawag. I'd say a lesson's in order for you.

ROBIN: Oh please, good Father, I meant no harm. I've been bitter ever since... I lost the use of my legs.

TUCK: Your ---- (*Studying him.*) Hmmmm. Sorry, fellow, I did not know.

ROBIN: Ahhh it's all right, don't take pity on me. I loathe pity, Father.

TUCK: Yes. I'm sure you're used to it. What's your business here?

ROBIN: Alas, none but to leave this terrifying wood as soon as possible. But crawling, my progress is slow.

TUCK: I can well imagine, my worm-like friend. Perhaps I could be of service.

ROBIN: Oh, would you? I would be ever so grateful. Do you actually think you could---dare I say it--- *carry me* through the wood?

TUCK: I'm sure it's little effort.

ROBIN: You're *sure*. I mean, all that food won't explode or anything, will it?

TUCK: (*Containing himself.*) No, the food won't explode. I'm well contained.

ROBIN: Well packed, yes. (*A pathetic little laugh.*) Like an entire winter storehouse for a family of seven hundred--- you are indeed.

TUCK: (*Slight laugh with no amusement.*) Well, best climb on my back now. (*Bends.*)

ROBIN: (*Begins to climb up.*) An expanse I perceive as wide as the great Ottoman Empire itself.

TUCK: You do flatter me, sir, you do. (*Begins to carry Robin.*)

ROBIN: Not at all. Your girth has no justice, sir--- nothing in the known world I can compare it to ... Except maybe ... *the known world.* (*TUCK stops walking, doing a slow turn.*)

ROBIN: Why have we stopped, sir? We've barely progressed. The woods are still thick around us... Although, how they seek to surround *you* is certainly one of the mysteries of nature. (*TUCK takes a deep, grunting breath and continues.*)

ROBIN: Oh, that doesn't sound good. Surely, I've winded you. No small task, judging the amount of wind you *could* hold.

TUCK: (*Strainingly polite.*) Perhaps you could hold *yours* until we reach the wood's edge.

ROBIN: Oh, I don't mind. Never at a loss for words, that's me. You know--- the way *you* are with *food*.

TUCK: Bless my soul! A gold sovereign!

ROBIN: (*Jumps to his feet.*) Where?!

TUCK: (*Looks at Robin's perfectly working legs and nods, grabbing his nose.*) Right *here*, you daft little twerp! (*HE pulls Robin's nose hard.*)

ROBIN: Ow!

TUCK: (*Smoothly draws his sword.*) Ready for a trouncing, my woodland wit?

ROBIN: (*Happily drawing his sword.*) Rather give you one, my gluttonous Friar!

ELEANOR (QUEEN), MARIAN

(In smooth, rapid fashion the camp is packed up and the BAND moves off silently into the wood. Pause. Voices are heard approaching. Soon, MARIAN and QUEEN ELEANOR enter strolling, plainly dressed.)

ELEANOR:---- I'm not saying you murdered a Royal Forester, my dear. But the fact you were there *can* implicate you.

MARIAN: But you talk as if I *know* this Robin Hood or something. Really, we only met once. And that, under the most unfavorable of circumstances. Why, I don't even like him.---- You wouldn't either, believe me. He's brash, arrogant, rude and unscrupulous.

ELEANOR: Don't leave out the horns and tail.

MARIAN: He tried to make my acquaintance under the most absurd trick.

ELEANOR: He must have been desperate to meet you;

MARIAN: Desperate is the word. *Ridiculous* is even better.

(THEY sit down to rest in the clearing.)

ELEANOR: You saw through it?

MARIAN: A side of beef could see through it. Although, I'm quite sure the village maiden is absolutely thrilled by that sort of show.

ELEANOR: Well, none-the-less, he's gaining quite a reputation for himself. I understand the Sheriff is particularly displeased.

MARIAN: Perhaps. It's nothing to do with me.

ELEANOR: I wish that were so... But the fact now stands, that if I don't comply with King John's wishes... he will have you arrested and put to death.

MARIAN: I'm sorry, Your Majesty. I've put you in grave difficulty.

ELEANOR: It wasn't your doing.

MARIAN: Please. Let me take to hiding, to the woods even--- I can survive. Don't let him hold my life over your head.

ELEANOR: I----... Marian, I----I don't know----

MARIAN: It's the only way! Why, we're deep in Sherwood now. I'll stay here.

ELEANOR: In the woods? Really, dear, do you think that's absolutely safe?

MARIAN: *(Gesturing at the forest around them.)* Look! Just me and Mother Nature! I'll hunt. And fish. There's not a soul around for miles!

MARIAN, ELEANOR, ALAN, MEG, ARTHUR, TUCK, MUCH, LITTLE JOHN

MARIAN: Please. Let me take to hiding, to the woods even--- I can survive. Don't let him hold my life over your head.

ELEANOR: I----... Marian, I----I don't know----

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ELEANOR: In the woods? Really, dear, do you think that's absolutely safe?

MARIAN: *(Gesturing at the forest around them.)* Look! Just me and Mother Nature! I'll hunt. And fish. There's not a soul around for miles! *(Robin Hood's BAND, minus Robin and Will, emerges from the woods all around them, to stand casually watching--- hands on hips, arms crossed, etc. MARIAN and ELEANOR are at first dumbfounded, then MARIAN stands, hand on sword.)*

ALAN: Good afternoon, good gentlewomen. We mean you no harm.

MEG: But since you are of a class.... Just a cut above the rest, we'll have to relieve you of some possessions, as it were.

ARTHUR: Spread it around.

MEG: So to speak.

TUCK: If you please.

MUCH: Don't worry, ladies! If you're lucky, you'll become poor! Then we'll give you all sorts of things! *(MARIAN and ELEANOR study them a moment. Then LITTLE JOHN steps forward. MARIAN starts to draw her sword. HE halts.)*

LITTLE JOHN: Now, there's no reason for that, good lady, no reason at all. I give you my word that no harm will come to you.

MARIAN: You're not going to harm us?

LITTLE JOHN: Not at all.

MARIAN: Your word.

LITTLE JOHN: My word.

MARIAN: *(Quickly to Eleanor.)* Good, let's go.

LITTLE JOHN: Now, hold on a second there---

MARIAN: What's the point? You're not going to harm us. You've given us your word. We might as well just go now. What's to stop us? What's keeping us here, if not fear of harm?

(LITTLE JOHN is plainly out of his league. HE thinks, confused. The BAND look at one another for help.)

ARTHUR: Alan's the smartest --- Alan, do something, will ya?

ALAN: What can I do? He gave his word!

MEG: Now, why did ya go and do that, Little John ---- give ya word?

LITTLE JOHN: I don't know... I wasn't thinking ... I'm really not gonna harm them ya know, so don't think that for a minute any of ya.

ARTHUR: Will ya shut up? Don't keep reassuring them, ya only make it worse.

MEG: We're losing our credibility as outlaws.

TUCK: How you people got by this long is beyond me.

LITTLE JOHN: Now don't you start, Friar, I've had enough of you.

TUCK: Well, someone better start. Now listen, ladies, either you give us your possessions or ... *(HE thinks.)* Or we'll surround you in a big clump and you'll never leave the woods.

LITTLE JOHN: *(Under his breath.)* He could do that by himself. *(TUCK glares at him.)*

MARIAN: Fine. Fine. You do and I'll hack my way through with this sword.

(TUCK considers this, looks to the others. The BAND huddles silently a moment, breaks.)

ALAN: Well, wait a minute, now wait a minute, miss. That hardly seems fair. We promised not to hurt you.

MARIAN: Yes, you did. Didn't you *(A broad smug smile.)* But I didn't.

(The BAND look at each other. Pause.)

ALAN: Robin!...

LITTLE JOHN: Robin!

MARIAN, ELEANOR, ROBIN

(MARIAN looks at ELEANOR at mention of the name. At this point, if possible, it would be marvelous for OUR HERO to come swinging in on a rope. If not, we'll settle for a vaillant leap. At any rate; enter ROBIN.)

ROBIN: Welcome to Sherwood, ladies!

MARIAN: *(Casually distant.)* There he is.

ROBIN: Well, it's you! How nice! I was hoping to run into you again.

MARIAN: Your lucky day.

ROBIN: *(Laughing.)* Ah same attitude--- That's what I love about you. Men and women of Sherwood, may I present... Marian Harper, lady-in-waiting to Queen Eleanor! And bless my soul, well this must be none other than Her Majesty Queen Eleanor herself!

ELEANOR: Well, he seems perceptive enough. *(The BAND laughs.)*

MARIAN: Your Majesty, he doesn't believe you.

ELEANOR: Well, who would. A queen wandering around out here. I hardly blame him.

(More laughter from the BAND.)

ROBIN: What a wonderful spirit of fun you both have! Come! You must join us, both of you! Refreshment for everyone!

(The CAMP becomes a bustle of activity, food and drink being distributed.)

MARIAN: Thanks, but we'd really rather not---

ELEANOR: Oh, let's stay. I'm interested to see the life of an outlaw.

(MARIAN shakes her head as ELEANOR receives a cup of wine from ARTHUR.)

ELEANOR: Tell me, do you really give your spoils to the poor?

ROBIN: All but what little we need for our own survival.

MARIAN: *(Chuckling.)* Yes, mere pennies I'm sure. How humble of you.

ROBIN: You could stand a little a' that yourself, M'lady. Look around, where are the riches? The fineries?

MARIAN: Hidden from our eyes, I'm sure.

ROBIN: *(Chuckling.)* You're a stubborn little--- Would you like some wine?

MARIAN: No, thank you.

ELEANOR: It's quite good.

MARIAN: Please, Your Majesty, let's go.

(Snickers of "Your Majesty" from the GROUP.)

ROBIN: You don't give up, do you? I do love a woman who enjoys a good jest. What do you really do? No, don't tell me. Let me guess. Tinker's wife? Pastry baker? Embroiderer?

MARIAN: Court executioner.

(Laughter from the CAMP.)

SHERIFF, ELLEN

(The SHERIFF looks at ELLEN a moment. HE walks about.)

SHERIFF: Your attitude doesn't seem to be improving... If it makes a difference, I've spoken to your parents and they've given us permission to wed.

ELLEN: No, they didn't.

(Pause.)

SHERIFF: Well, I don't need their permission anyway--- I'm the Sheriff.

ELLEN: Upholder of the Law.

SHERIFF: Well, what do you want me to do? Woo you?

ELLEN: Oh, please don't do that. Please spare me a wooing.

SHERIFF: Frankly, I wouldn't know how to.

ELLEN: Frankly, I'm not surprised. And I appreciate that, by the way.

SHERIFF: *(Looks at her a moment, then grabs her roughly.)* My, but you do---

ELLEN: Let me go!

SHERIFF: ----- You do have a sharp tongue for a little ragamuffin whom I had the generosity of dragging up from the mud.

ELLEN: You! You'd have me *deeper* in it!

SHERIFF: *(Slaps her.)* See? You see what you've made me do? *(HE strolls about.)* Oh, this had better improve, that's all I can say. When we're married, my dear, your attitude had better change. *(HE leans across the table to her, quietly.)* OR I really will visit your parents... And it won't be so much *asking* for your hand... as it will be *removing theirs*.

(ELLEN Studies his cold malevolence fearfully.)

SHERIFF: *(calls for Hilton)* Hilton!

BISHOP, SHERIFF

(HILTON takes ELLEN out, passing by the BISHOP who watches them leave with amusement.)

BISHOP: Made in heaven.

SHERIFF: There are more important things----

BISHOP: I know. Robin Hood struck again.

SHERIFF: Robin hood! All I hear is Robin Hood!

BISHOP: He's becoming more famous than King John.

SHERIFF: Rob from the rich so he can give to the poor! What kind of nonsense is that?! Doesn't he know I'm only going to take it away again?! Hasn't he heard of taxes?!... Idiots!... If this absurd recycling of funds continues, I might as well burn the books!

BISHOP: Sort of clever when you think about it. Amusing little serfs. Seems like they're always up to something.

SHERIFF: Oh, Bishop, I'm glad you can take this so lightly. Have you forgotten the taxes go to your church too?

BISHOP: Of course not, I never forget money. I just don't worry about it. That's the difference between you and me. You agonize and bang your head---- I'll continue to spout pleasantries and good humor.

SHERIFF: *(In a rage.)* And in doing so provide none of the assistance of the "valuable ally" you're supposed to be!!

BISHOP: There they go again. *(referring to the veins on the Sheriff's head)* Those horrid veins....

SHERIFF: Bishop!!

BISHOP: Now it just so happens I have given the matter some thought. And if you calm down. I just might tell you about it.

SHERIFF: *(Exhales. Pause. He plops down in his chair wearily.)* Grace me with your brilliance...

BISHOP: Gladly. Now it seems to me, that if we deprive the dragon of its head, it will cease to breathe fire and smoke.

(The SHERIFF slowly, balefully, turns to him, then looks away again.)

BISHOP: Now. I have always said, "To catch a thief, it takes a thief."

SHERIFF: *(Disinterested.)* Have you.

BISHOP: It just so happens, in my native Herefordshire there is a bold and murderous outlaw of great renown, equal to this ... Robin Hood. He has done me many favors in the past... for the right price.

SHERIFF: And what might that be?

BISHOP: Two hundred pounds should attract his interest.

SHERIFF: *(Turns to him sharply. Pause.)* It had better do more than attract his interest. I would expect nothing less than Robin Hood's head on a pole.

BISHOP: *(Staring at him.)* I find this preoccupation with the human head disgusting to say the least. I won't be here for the delivery, I promise you.

SHERIFF: *(Rises, strolls in thought.)* Tell this man we will pay him half now and the other half upon completion of his task.

BISHOP: I'm sure he'll be agreeable. You'll find him a strange sort of fellow, as feared by the people of my region as Robin is loved by his. *(Leans forward with melodramatic amusement.)* He wears the hide of a horse... He believes it gives him power.

SHERIFF: As long as he gets the job done. What's his name?

BISHOP: Guy. Guy of Gisbourne.

WILL, BISHOP, FORESTER, LITTLE JOHN, ARTHUR, ALAN, MEG

(The BISHOP and FORESTER walk on a path in the woods. WILL steps out from the wood before them. The BISHOP screams.)

WILL: Sorry, Your Grace. Didn't mean to startle you.

BISHOP: A minion of Beelzebub!

FORESTER: Here you. What's ya business, here?

WILL: Business? *(Pause. WILL thinks.)* Oh, I know, Pies.

FORESTER: What?

WILL: *(Calling as a vendor.)* Pies! Any fine pies today!

BISHOP: No, we don't have any pies. What would a bishop be doing with pies? *(Pause.)*

WILL: No no no no. I have the pies. See, I'm selling them. Listen---- *(Calling.)* Pies! Who will buy my fine pies, today?! Pies!

BISHOP: Get out of the way. We don't want your fine pies. Where do you keep them anyway, in your pockets? Let's go. *(LITTLE JOHN steps out beside WILL. They block the way. The BISHOP yelps.)*

LITTLE JOHN: What's the trouble here?

BISHOP: We're trying to pass, but this... pie salesman won't let us.

LITTLE JOHN: Ohhhh no! Not the pie man again! He's always doing this!

BISHOP: Really? It's annoying.

LITTLE JOHN: Certainly is. Now see here, you, that's a full-fledged bishop right there. Do you know you're blocking him? *(Pause.)*

WILL: Pies! Who will buy my fine pies today?! Pies!

(THEY begin to push LITTLE JOHN's stick back and forth in an extremely fake struggle. ARTHUR enters.)

ARTHUR: All right, break this up now! What's this all about?

BISHOP: The pie man's annoying everyone because we won't buy his pies.

ARTHUR: Doesn't seem right at all, does it?

LITTLE JOHN: Well, instead of talking, why don't you help me move him?

ARTHUR: Needn't be a jerk about it.

BISHOP: He didn't mean it--- Would you *help!*

ALAN: *(Enters from the woods.)* Here, I'm tryin ta pass, do you mind?

BISHOP: Well, we all mind, but it won't do any good.

WILL: Pies! Who will buy my fine pies!

BISHOP: Perhaps if one of you bought one from him----

LITTLE JOHN: You buy one! You look like you've had the practice.

BISHOP: *(To the Forester.)* Did you hear what he said to me?!

FORESTER: I'm sorry, I haven't kept track, M'Lord.

(MEG enters from the woods.)

BISHOP: Not another one!

MEG: What's all this noise here? You're disturbing the woods.

BISHOP: There's nobody *left* in the woods!

MEG: What goes on here?

LITTLE JOHN: *(Slowly, broadly long-suffering.)* We're trying to move the pie man.

WILL: Who you pushing? Don't push the pie man.

BISHOP: *Kill* the pie man.

ALAN: Try *lifting* him maybe. We'll go under.

BISHOP: Who are all these people?

MEG: Divide the pie man in two. We'll go between him.

BISHOP: I had no idea this forest was so busy.

ARTHUR: Reason with the pie man. He'll understand that.

BISHOP: They should make the road much wider at this spot.

WILL: Look, all I wish in life is to sell my good pies.

MEG: Ohhh, why didn't you say so!

ALAN: I'll buy a pie!

ARTHUR: I'd like a pie very much.

LITTLE JOHN: I'd like *two* pies.

BISHOP: What *is* this? It's too confusing. Wait! Are you all in this together? Is this a trick to get me to buy a pie? All right, all right, I'll take one! Let me have a pie! Let me have *all* your pies!

(The BISHOP is now surrounded, leaving the FORESTER out of the group. LITTLE JOHN grabs the FORESTER by the collar, quietly.)

LITTLE JOHN: If you run away really fast, I won't rip your ankles off.

(Pause.)

FORESTER: Fair enough.

(HE runs off. The BISHOP is trapped in a gang of outlaws.)

BISHOP: What are you doing? Careful! I'm very holy!

BISHOP, ROBIN

(Pause. The BISHOP screams, fainting back. The BISHOP recovers with a series of panting sobs.)

BISHOP: Please! Please! I'll pay you! I'll make you all rich men!

(ROBIN swings/ leaps into the scene.)

ROBIN: Ya hear that, lads?! We can be rich! Just like him!

BISHOP: Yes! Yes!

ROBIN: Hundreds of Bishops of Hereford, marching down the street! Covered in jewels! Our fat bellies jiggling in the wind! Ahhh, now think it over, lads and lasses! It would give us a chance to be cruel and merciless and have all the food we can eat--- depriving those less fortunate, though higher taxes.

BISHOP: Yes! I mean, no---

ROBIN: *(Moves closer to the Bishop, quietly.)* You mean yes... Because that's the way you think... You're selfish and greedy and ignorant. You give nothing to the people, but your loathing. You're the least holy man I know, besides King John.

BISHOP: He is a personal friend of mine.

ROBIN: *(Smiling ominously.)* I know... I have considered that... in your sentencing.

BISHOP: Sentencing!

ROBIN: Yes... But, I'm leaving you to a higher judge.

BISHOP: *(Eye wide.)* ... I--- I think I know who you mean!

ROBIN: Really? I'm surprised at that. He's forsaken you long ago. As you've forsaken him.

BISHOP: What--- what are you going to do?

ROBIN: First... I'm going to give you a chance to say your prayers--- if you still remember how... Then... *we're going to hang you!*

BISHOP: No! No! No! You can't! You can't!

(The BISHOP is quickly blindfolded and a broken noose is placed around his neck.)

BISHOP: I tell you, you're making a mistake!

ROBIN: No, I think we've got it right--- noose, neck, tree, drop--- I think that should do it. Take this walking pillow to the nearest branch and heave him! Farewell, Your Grace! It's been unpleasant!

(The BISHOP is whisked off.)

BISHOP: No! No! No!....

GUY, MUCH

In Sherwood Forest MUCH and GUY continue to drink and sing the "Treadmill" song.

MUCH & GUY: "Step in, young man, and know your fate. It's nothing in your favor. A little time I'll give to you. Six months unto hard labor. With me---Hip! For the day. Me---Hip! For the day." Me--- Hip, for the day-de-ohhhh...."

GUY: "At six o'clock the screw comes in---"

MUCH: "...a bunch of keys all in his hand!"

GUY: "Step up, my lads, step up inside---"

MUCH & GUY: "...and tread the wheel 'til breakfast time!"

(THEY burst into laughter. GUY slaps Much hard on the back. HE suddenly becomes serious.)

GUY: *(A quick yell.)* You're off-key!

MUCH: I'm sorry, horse, I never professed the singing ability of a four legged animal.

GUY: Well who would? *(Passing Much the wine sack.)* Tell me more of this Robin Hood. It must be a right merry camp to live in.

MUCH: I fain think it is, good my horse.

GUY: Fain?

MUCH: I fain think---

GUY: Fain fain fain, why are you all fain? Strike that word from my sight and never thus utter again!

MUCH: Fain?

GUY: *(Roaring.)* Strike, I say! Rid yourself of such frills and humbuggery! No pretensions and no affections! Strike!!

MUCH: Aye, my captain, strike will I.

GUY: *(Bends close to Much, quietly.)* Now ... Where, Much---where exactly is this happy camp?

MUCH: Camp, my horse? What camp?

(Pause.)

GUY: *(Smiles, batting his eyes.)* Why, the bandits' camp.

MUCH: Bandits, my horse? What bandits?

GUY: *(Roaring.)* Robin Hood!! Robin Hood!! Give to the rich!! Take from the poor!! Where's the bloody camp!! The camp of Robin Hood!! *(Quiet and pleasant again.)* Do you know the one I mean?

MUCH: I fain think so---

GUY: Strike!!

MUCH: I mean...I think so. It's yonder about two miles. Follow the stream upland. It comes to Greenwood Glen. There's a stand of oak and beech. That's the camp.

GUY: *(A broad smile.)* Ahhh...

MUCH: *(Tentatively.)* Good horse... art thou ... *mad* at me?

GUY: You? Mad at you? My good little friend? Of course not.

MUCH: Oh.

GUY: *(Brightly.)* I'm just *anxious*.

MUCH: And I *fain* wonder ... if I am mad too ... for telling you what I done told...

(GUY appears scary, as if HE's about to strike MUCH, but instead HE sings "Treadmill Song" again.)

GUY: "Now Saturday's come, I'm sorry to say---"

MUCH: *(Sings very nervously as HE begins to slowly back away.)* "...for Sunday is starvation day."

GUY: *(Moves toward the terrified MUCH.)* "Our hobnailed boots and our tin cups too---"

MUCH: "... they are not shined and they will not---"

(BLACKOUT.)

GUY, SHERIFF

GUY: (*Bows*) Thank you, thank you, Your Majesty. Most gracious.

SHERIFF: I am not Your Majesty.

GUY: Whose Majesty are you?

SHERIFF: (*To the Bishop.*) Two hundred pounds? Two hundred pounds for a clown? For a court jester in a horse's costume?

GUY: (*Whimpering pathetically.*) Oh, Majesty, your little words sting me.

SHERIFF: (*At the door.*) Someone remove this pathetic wretch from my sight!

(*GUY suddenly spins the SHERIFF around.*)

GUY: (*Intensely.*) Wretch?... Jester?... Clown?... No one talks to me like that... And this is not a costume. This is the hide of a horse, tanned and cured---tough as armor, but lighter still---through which the strength of the horse is passed to me. I have killed sixty men, which Robin Hood will be one more, and any who doubt... *oppose me now.*

(*Pause.*)

SHERIFF: If you ever touch me again your head will leave your shoulders so fast you'll never set foot in Nottingham again, is that clear?

(*Pause.*)

GUY: (*Slowly smiles.*) Clear... Clear, clear and mostly clear, Your Majesty.

SHERIFF: I am not--- (*Gives up correcting him.*) What progress have you made?

GUY: Oh, that which is best, have I made, sir. The camp of which location, I have in my hands.

SHERIFF: And where is this camp?

GUY: (*Laughing.*) Oh, I think not. Have an armed force march in there and scatter the lot? *A hundred* muddy the water that *one man* treads clearly. Besides ... that wasn't the agreement. It's a head you'll be getting; and not a drawn map.

SHERIFF: Very well.

GUY: Two hundred now and another two when I deliver.

SHERIFF: (*Slowly.*) You're holding me up? You're holding me up for more?

GUY: Now that I have the location, yes.

SHERIFF: Which of you is Robin Hood?! I can no longer tell!

GUY: Come, come, Lordship, I know what this man means to you both. I heard they robbed some fat bishop just the other day. (*HE laughs.*)

(*The SHERIFF slowly turns to glare at the squirming BISHOP.*)

PRIORESS, SHERIFF

SHERIFF: Thank you for waiting, Prioress.

PRIORESS: What is this about, Lord Sheriff?

SHERIFF: You know full well what it's about, my dear. Come, come, you were in the bandits' camp, were you not? *(Pause.)*

PRIORESS: I see no reason to deny it. It is God's will I was born Robin Hood's cousin, and no doing of my own. *(The SHERIFF is stunned.)*

SHERIFF: Cousin... There's an interesting shade of color ...If ever there was a threat to your...retaining the priority at Kirklees, I would say it was ... *blood ties to a murderous outlaw.*

PRIORESS: Murderous ... You know he's not Murderous---

SHERIFF: No! Not when it's a Royal Forester---

PRIORESS: Not when it's self-defense!

SHERIFF: Oh please....I did not bring you here to discuss legalities. The situation is plain... You are giving out stolen money given to you by Robin Hood. More than enough to block you from the priory and slap you in prison for good... Unless of course...

PRIORESS: Unless what?

SHERIFF: You see, Lord Bishop? She's eager for a chance to make good. *(Quietly to Prioress.)* I knew you had some in you... You are to report to me Robin Hood's every move. From now on I want to know everything these outlaws do. Is that clear?

PRIORESS: Yes. It is.

SHERIFF: You comply very quickly. Have I reformed you so fast? I warn you, if you try any sort of trick---

PRIORESS: *(An ironic chuckle.)* No, My Lord. You didn't reform me. The donations from Robin Hood? I keep half that money for myself ... You see, I'm not as strong as my cousin. And in these sad time with our snake King John---

SHERIFF: Take care---

PRIORESS: Draining the kingdom dry, the only way I could keep the priory going was through a little thievery of my own... No, you haven't reformed me... *(Quietly as SHE starts to leave.)* I was at your level to begin with. *(SHE exits.)*

ROBIN, MARIAN

In Sherwood forest, not far from the camp, ROBIN and MARIAN are lying peacefully in the grass, their swords off to one side.

MARIAN: You really want to hear it, don't you?

ROBIN: Well, I wouldn't mind hearing *something*, at least.

MARIAN: Well, I don't know if I particularly want to say it.

ROBIN: Why not?

MARIAN: Well, for one thing, the sole purpose seems to be satisfy your massive ego.

ROBIN: I think it's rather *your* ego that's at stake, don't you? When someone can't do a simple thing like admit they made a harsh, irrational judgement on another human being---

MARIAN: How can you say that? *(Softly, close to him.)* Especially in light of what's happened...

ROBIN: Now, wait a minute here, don't try and buy off my feelings ...

(Pause.)

MARIAN: What does that *mean*? What are you *talking* about?

ROBIN: Well, it's obvious, I'm just trying to separate work and pleasure. I know you respect me in one area... it's... the other I'm concerned about.

MARIAN: *(Pause. Stares at him.)* You mean I respect your pleasure, but I don't respect your work?

(Pause.)

ROBIN: Well, it sounds foolish now, of course.

MARIAN: I'm glad we agree.

ROBIN: But you know full well what I mean.

MARIAN: No I do not, Robin. I do not separate a person from what they do. In this life you are as good as your deeds. *(pause)* I was wrong about you, *Robin Hood!* Takes from the rich, so he can give to the poor! Ballads will be sung, banners will be raised, and food will be named after you. Children will look up, the Sheriff will look down, but you will always look straight and true. Long live your name and may all your offspring be giants---Have I left anything out? Was that what you wanted to hear?

(Pause.)

ROBIN: Yes. Yes, I think that rather does it.

MARIAN: *(Pushes him over.)* You are such a... Saxon.

(HE grabs her playfully. After a moment, THEY kiss OR hug.)

ROBIN: What did you mean Saxon?

MARIAN: Oh, Robin, you---

(SHE gives a quick cry as SHE sees GUY emerging from the woods. ROBIN is on his feet, but their swords are not within reach.)

KING John, SHERIFF
(KING JOHN enters quickly.)

KING: I hate to break up this tender romantic interlude--- (*Whispering, pointing to the door.*) It's Mother--- She's---

(QUEEN ELEANOR enters. The KING abruptly goes into a fake act of yelling at the SHERIFF.)

KING: How dare you! How dare you keep Queen Eleanor's favorite lady-in-waiting, Marian Harper, here against her will!

SHERIFF: (*Sarcasm; knowing he needs to "play along".*) How could I have done such a thing?

KING: I don't know. Perhaps you have taken leave of your senses.

SHERIFF: Perhaps I have.

KING: I should have your job.

SHERIFF: I wish you did. (*The KING shoots him a look, then continues.*)

KING: Dare you hold her prisoner?! Why it's obvious a case of mistaken identity as never I seen! Even the court fool could see that.

SHERIFF: (*Under his breath.*) Apparently he has.

KING: I demand you release her at once! Do you hear me?!

SHERIFF: Fairly well.

KING: I demand it!!

SHERIFF: Very well, My Royal Liege. I shall deliver this poor wretch at once into her Highness' custody. However could I have done this? (*The KING gives him a subtle look of warning against going too far.*)

SHERIFF: A Thousand pardons to both Your Majesties and any other Majesties I might have discomfited by this outrageous and unforgivable behavior. (*The KING clears his throat.*)

SHERIFF: I only hope I may live a thousand years so I may repay this debt ten thousand times over---provided you live so long as to collect it.

KING: Yes, thank you, Sheriff, that will do.

(The QUEEN exits.)

KING: Played that a bit thick, didn't you? Not that I'm a critic of these sort of things.

SHERIFF: Just once ... Just once do you think you could shine the torch of your knowledge in my direction so that we don't tread each others' toes in the darkness of my ignorance.

KING: Now you're being melodramatic.

SHERIFF: *I'm* being melodramatic! What about, "How dare you, how dare you" for the benefit of the Queen?

KING: The Queen and I have an agreement concerning Maid Marian.

SHERIFF: But did you think to tell me? No!

KING: It didn't concern you.

SHERIFF: As it turned out, it *did!*

(Pause.)

KING: Do you want your bride to be taller than you at the wedding?

(The SHERIFF glares a moment, then sits.)

KING: Good. Now, I'm just dying to meet this Robin Hood and I want you to be in your usual high spirits.

SHERIFF: (*At the door.*) Have Robin Hood brought in!

KING John, SHERIFF, ROBIN

(ROBIN looks up at them, filthy, haggard, and in some discomfort. The KING strolls over for a closer look.)

KING: He doesn't look like a bandit chief.

SHERIFF: Now he's the chief of the rats, M'Lord. Time for a beating.

(SHERIFF chuckles harshly. The KING looks at him with distaste...)

SHERIFF: *(Stop chuckling and clears his throat.)* That honor will have to wait until later.

ROBIN: *(With effort.)* Later! You can't rearrange my day like that. You'll throw off my entire schedule.

(SHERIFF swats him.)

SHERIFF: Pathetic fool. That's right, make it worse on yourself... This, my annoying little pest is King John.

ROBIN: This annoying little pest is King John? How does Your Majesty allow a mere servant to talk to him like that?

(ALL are stunned and the SHERIFF slaps ROBIN who jumps up to throttle him and SHERIFF stops him)

KING: Had a good breakfast, did he?

SHERIFF: If that tongue were removed, it wouldn't be so quick.

KING: Maybe you'd be able to keep up with him then.

SHERIFF: Ha!

ROBIN: *(To the Sheriff.)* Well said, My Lord.

SHERIFF: I grow tired of this carnival atmosphere. Does Your Majesty wish any more of this... entertainment? Or shall we send for the jugglers and turn the great hall into a circus?

KING: I'll turn it into a tinker's shop and stable, if I so choose.

SHERIFF: By all means, bring in the horses and the tinkers!

KING: I would keep this Robin Hood around if I were you! He keeps you on your toes!

ROBIN: I've earned him a barony---Why not?

SHERIFF: Oh, look what he's doing---Trying to turn the two of us against each other.

KING: What utter nonsense!

SHERIFF: Why, he's making a fool of Your Majesty!

KING: You're the one who's falling to pieces!

SHERIFF: I am?

KING: Yes, look at you! Raising your voice! Turning red as a beet!

SHERIFF: So are you! So are you!

KING: I---

(The KING catches himself. HE and the SHERIFF both calm. Pause. The KING looks eye to eye with the defiant ROBIN.)

KING: You are a clever fellow, aren't you? ... You know, maybe I was wrong. Perhaps it is a good idea to have an execution at the wedding ... I think I'll rather enjoy it.

(BLACKOUT.)