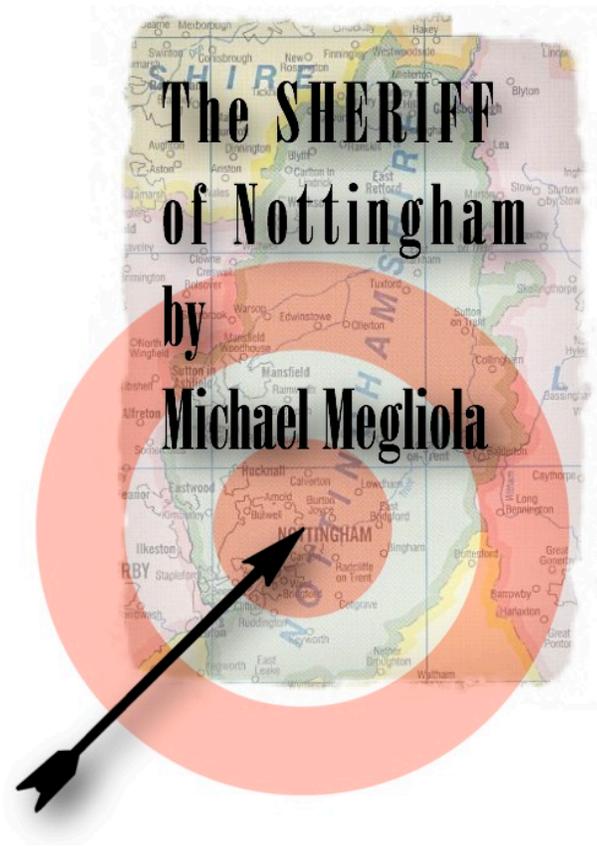


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Newport, Maine

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THE SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM

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CAST OF CHARACTERS (18m 3w + ensemble. Roles can be played by either gender)

The Sheriff (of Nottingham)

King Richard (The Lionhearted)

King John

Robin Hood, (Robin Fitzooth, Earl of Huntingdon)

Maid Marian (Lady Marian Fitzwalter)

Friar Tuck

Crowd

Will Scarlet

Soldier 1

Solder 2

The Palmer (Robin Hood)

Crowd

Sir Guy of Gisbourne

Two archers

Festivalgoers

Sir Robert Fitzwalter

Harold (Fitzwalter's Elderly Attendant)

The King's Men (Soldiers)

A Saracen

Old Woman

Little John

Robin Hood's Merryman

The Witch

Eglamor (a shepherd)

Sir Robert Fitzwalter (Marian's father)

King Richard (The Lionheart)

Harold

Developed by the **New Hampshire Theatre Project's Artistic Director**, *Genevieve Aichele*; **Resident Director** of the Youth Company, *Meghann Beauchamp*, with staff and local playwrights like Michael Megliola, *Leicester Bay Theatricals* is pleased to bring you these wonderful and challenging scripts with topics and material for today's youth from age 7 to 18.

New Hampshire Theatre Project
Junior Youth Repertory Company
Spring, 2014
directed by
Meghann Beauchamp

The cast of the original company was as follows: 5m 5f

The Sheriff - **Annika**
King Richard - **Russell**
King John - **Caylie**
Robin Hood - **Sebastian**
Marian - **Colleen**
Friar Tuck - **Elizabeth**
Little John - **Leo**
Will Scarlet - **Russell**
Sir Guy of Gisbourne - **Caylie**
Sir Robert Fitzwalter - **Cayden**
Harold - **Sebastian**
Saracen - **Leo**
Old Woman - **Cayden**
English Soldier - **Russell**
Witch - **Elizabeth**
Eglamor - **Cayden**

THE SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM by Michael Megliola 18M 3F + ensemble (Doubling is possible to 5m 5f +soldiers and Merry Men) About 1 hour. (*TYA, Children's Theatre, Amateur, Professional, Educational groups.*) Robin Hood is known by many as a heroic outlaw who stole from the rich to give to the poor but many of the details of the story are often ignored. Who was Robin and how did he come to be? With a fresh look at this beloved story, Michael Megliola has written a new play from the perspective of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Caught between loyalty to the absent King Richard (missing for 6 years while fighting a Crusade) and demands from the greedy Prince John (who is acting King), the Sheriff finds himself playing a cat and mouse game with one Robert Fitzooth (aka Robin Hood), Marion Fitzwalter (aka Maid Marian) and a band of merry (and not-so-merry) men! *A New Hampshire Theatre Project Young People's Playscript. ORDER # 3130*

Michael Megliola has spent many years contributing to progressive theater for young actors. All three of his sons appeared on stage with New Hampshire Theatre Project in Portsmouth, NH. The youngest, Leo, inspired him to write for that stage. Michael's goal is to stress technique, support an ensemble cast, and make material accessible to young actors without diluting its message.

AUTHOR NOTE: This original take on the legend of Robin Hood answers the question "could the Sheriff really be that inept?" (Hint... the answer is "no"). Written for middle-school actors, the script stresses technique, comedy, and making the most of minimal costume and set.

PERFORMANCE NOTE: Throughout the play, the Sheriff breaks the fourth wall to address the audience directly, and when doing so, freezes the other actors; to signify these moments, the Sheriff removes his hat.

Act One

Scene 1 -- *John declares himself King and disrupts Robin Hood's wedding*

The Sheriff
King Richard
King John
Robin Hood
Maid Marian
Friar Tuck
Crowd

SHERIFF: *(enters, removes his hat and addresses the audience)* Why is it my special burden to serve as Sheriff of Nottingham? Well... we can't all be kings.

(Richard, dignified, enters from the left. Replacing his hat)

His highness, King Richard of England!

(Richard nods.)

JOHN: *(enters from the right.)*

SHERIFF: His Highness...

(Richard scowls, the Sheriff pauses then starts again)

His Lordship...

(King John scowls, the Sheriff pauses a second time, then starts again, turning to John)

His Highness...

(Then to Richard)

but not so high as his other highness

(Then to the audience.)

Prince John of England!

JOHN: *(bows, then addressing Richard)* What news, brother?

RICHARD: I'm off to Jerusalem, to conquer the holy land.

JOHN: You're not serious.

RICHARD: I am.

JOHN: That would take an army of a million men.

RICHARD: It will take only courage and the grace of God. Will you join me?

JOHN: *(after a pause)* I'd best keep an eye on things around here. Hurry back though.

(As Richard exits, calling after him.)

...and do be careful.

(After Richard has left, surveying the stage and noticing the Sheriff, with arrogance.)

Remind me... who are you?

SHERIFF: My lord, I am the Sheriff of Nottingham.

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JOHN: (*gesturing to the audience*) And these good people?

SHERIFF: Why, the citizens of Nottingham.

JOHN: And these citizens, of Nottingham, do they pay taxes?

SHERIFF: In full and on time, to a man, sir, they do.

JOHN: And to whom?

SHERIFF: To whom, sir?

JOHN: To whom do they pay their taxes?

SHERIFF: (*confused*) To the Crown, sir, or course. They pay their taxes to the King.

JOHN: (*self-satisfied*) To King John.

SHERIFF: (*wary*) To King Richard, sir.

JOHN: (*angry*) Didn't you hear, man? Are you deaf, or disloyal, or dumb? My brother Richard is, well, indisposed. He's off on an errand to conquer Jerusalem and should return in about... well... never. And until he does return, I am John, King of England, and woe to any man who says that I am not!

SHERIFF: (*removes his hat, freezing John and suspending the action, to address the audience directly*) And so it was. Richard has gone off on his crusade to seize the Holy Land and John has crowned himself King. And what a King! If you walk, he will tax your shoes, and if you take them off he will tax your feet. People call Richard "Lionheart"!

(Whispering.)

People call John pig-swindler. And what a kingdom! Half the nobility swear allegiance to King Richard, and the other half to John.

(Robin and Marian enter from the left, attended by Friar Tuck. Marian is wearing a veil.)

Look, here's a wedding, but King John's invitation seems to have been lost in the mail. *Replaces his hat.*

(Robin, Marian, and the Friar arrange themselves as though the Friar is performing their wedding.)

FRIAR: Do you, Robert, take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife?

JOHN: (*to the Sheriff*) What's this, then?

SHERIFF: A wedding, sire.

JOHN: (*incensed*) I know that, you fool! Whose wedding?

SHERIFF: A nobleman, sire. Robert Fitzooth, Earl of Huntingdon.

ROBIN: (*who, along with Marian and the Friar, as though in their own bubble, notice neither Sheriff nor King John*) I do.

JOHN: (*snappish*) You do not!

FRIAR: And do you, Marian, take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?

JOHN: And who is she?

SHERIFF: That's the lady Marian, daughter of Robert Fitzwalter, a baron of Essex.

JOHN: Fitzwalter of Essex! That rogue, the one who swears allegiance to Richard? I'll show these fools who's King!

(King John approaches the wedding party, who now take notice; the Sheriff follows along behind.)

Halt, in the name of the King!

FRIAR: (*joyful, as always*) Richard! Where is our fine fellow? Has he returned?

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JOHN: I was referring to myself.

FRIAR: Oh. Sorry, sir, we'll be with you in just a moment. Now then, Marian, do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?

JOHN: (*screeching, to the Sheriff*) You there!, Sheriff of –

SHERIFF: Nottingham.

JOHN: Right. Nottingham. Arrest these people.

SHERIFF: On what charge, sir?

JOHN: Treason! ...and failure to pay taxes!

ROBIN: (*who is unarmed*) Your highness, if you please. Send a man to Locksley tomorrow and I assure you, all will be made right, but for now, it is our wedding day.

JOHN: It is not your wedding day unless I say it is your wedding day.

(Drawing his sword.)

I am the King.

FRIAR: (*chuckling*) Of course, of course you are, and a good King, too. But sire, no man draws blood in this holy place. I beseech you, put away your sword.

JOHN: (*looking around, as though seeing his surroundings for the first time*) Sheriff of Nottingham?

SHERIFF: Sire?

JOHN: What is this place?

SHERIFF: The holy chapel of Saint Mary.

JOHN: (*looking around again, in recognition, then gesturing to Robin*) Right then. Step outside.

ROBIN: If I may ask, your Highness, what for?

JOHN: So that I might slay you in the street.

(As Robin moves to exit to the right, a crowd emerges to greet him, expecting him to exit a newlywed with Marian. They give a ragged cheer, but Robin signals to be quiet as he wiggles into the center of the group then turns to face King John. King John cannot approach Robin without attacking the crowd, who close around him as they see King John approaching.)

ROBIN: (*As the crowd ushers him safely offstage*) As I said, Highness! At Locksley! Tomorrow!

(Lights down.)

Scene 2 -- Will Scarlet is captured

Will Scarlet

Soldier 1

Soldier 2

(Will Scarlet scurries across to center stage, holding a bag. He looks left, then right. He is being pursued; the sound of his pursuers are heard from offstage. He looks for a place to hide the bag. He

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*exits to the right; more sounds; he reappears, without the bag; two of the King's **Men** enter, one from the right, the other from the left; each draws his sword. **Will** is unarmed.)*

SOLDIER 1: Hold! Thief! Halt where you stand!

WILL: *(panting)* I am not a thief.

SOLDIER 1: We followed you from Locksley. You are Will Scarlet, friend of the traitor Robin Hood. What have you done with the money?

WILL: Pray, sir, what money?

SOLDIER 1: *(threatening)* In the name of the King, where is the money?

WILL: *(defiant)* What King?

SOLDIER 1: King John.

WILL: John, King of what?

SOLDIER 1: John, King of England!

WILL: I don't know of a King named John.

SOLDIER 2: *(collaring **Will** to lead him away)* He don't know of you, neither.
*(**Will** Scarlet is led off to the left. **Lights down.**)*

Scene 3 -- Will Scarlet is Rescued

The Sheriff

Will Scarlet

The Palmer (Robin Hood)

A soldier

A crowd

*(The village square in Nottingham. **Will** Scarlet is center stage, his hands behind his back. The **Sheriff** is presiding over a reading of the charges against **Will**. A **crowd** gathers to listen, including, near the fringe, a **Palmer** in a long robe wearing a hood. The **Sheriff** reads from a written decree...)*

SHERIFF: By the order of our good King John...

(He pauses, expecting a response... he clears his throat, but the crowd remains silent.)

... by the order of our good King John...

CROWD: *(without much enthusiasm)* Aye...

SHERIFF: *(surveying the crowd with a menacing look and raising his voice)* by the order of our good, King John, who sees what I see and knows what I know...

(pause)

CROWD: Aye!

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SHERIFF: I declare that this man, Will Scarlet, is a friend and protector of the rogue outlaw Robin Hood, a traitor to the crown, a menace and a danger. Upon my authority, this man Will Scarlet is sentenced to death by hanging, to atone for his crimes, may God rest his soul.

(The crowd remains silent.)

WILL: It's a strange charge, my Lord, to be a traitor to King John for being loyal to his brother King Richard.

SHERIFF: Your own words belie your innocence, Will Scarlet. Richard is away and John is our King.

WILL: *(defiant)* And when Richard returns, it will be you standing here, in my place, won't it, my Lord?

SHERIFF: When King Richard returns, you may ask him directly.

(The Palmer edges closer to Will.)

WILL: *(casting a sidelong glance at the Palmer)* My Lord. You and I were born Englishmen. We will die Englishmen. As an Englishman, I beg of you, let me go to an honorable death. Give me a sword and let me fight the whole compliment of your soldiers.

SHERIFF: *scoffing:* As a general rule, we don't offer swords to prisoners.

WILL: Nor do Englishmen hang like dogs.

(The Sheriff turns his back in derision, the Palmer edges closer still. Looking now toward the Palmer.)

Or keep your sword, my Lord, but slay me honest. I will face your soldiers unarmed.

SHERIFF: *(removing his hat and freezing the cast, then addressing the audience directly)* The fascinating thing, the genuinely fascinating thing about the nobility is that they think they are made of some special other stuff. They think they're not like other men. Look at Robin, creeping along in his robe like he's invisible. Under that robe, why I'll bet he's wearing Lincoln green. A master of disguise, indeed. And here am I...

(Counting on his fingers)

...needing to make sure he's the hero, and that Will Scarlet is rescued, and that no one gets hurt, and on top of all of that to be made the fool, it's a wonder I get out of bed in the morning.

(Returning to his place and replacing his hat, which restarts the action.)

Hangman! Step forward!

(No one steps forward.)

SOLDIER: Begging your pardon, my Lord. We drew straws among ourselves, and the hangman, well, he's not here.

SHERIFF: Well then, where is he?

SOLDIER: The ale house, my Lord.

SHERIFF: The ale house.

SOLDIER: Yes, sir.

SHERIFF: And need I ask what he is doing there?

SOLDIER: Yes, sir... well... no, sir. He's a bit drunk, sir. We've not never hanged a man before.

SHERIFF: *(surveying the crowd)* Very well then, men. I need a volunteer.

(The crowd looks down and shuffles its feet. The Palmer inches closer.)

Men! It is your duty! I need a volunteer!

PALMER: *(slowly raising his hand)* If it's the Lord's work, sir, I may be able to help.

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SHERIFF: And how, sir, could a hanging be the Lord's work?

PALMER: Why to send this man to heaven, of course, and for a small contribution to the church.

SHERIFF: *(again removing his hat and freezing the cast, to the audience)* It's difficult, but I'm getting accustomed to it. Think of it this way. Where's the honor, or glory, in hanging a minor criminal, never mind one whose friend may yet again be King? But... imagine. Imagine these two birds fly off, well, I could always catch them later. They're too noble not to get caught. And by then, well, if King John keeps the throne, I could win a seat at the court, and someone else can look after old Nottingham.

(Hat on. Nods.)

Come forward Palmer, you're our man.

(A Soldier unties Will's hands. He produces a rope, and hands it to the Palmer.)

PALMER: *(looping the rope into a slip knot and approaching Will Scarlet)* Kneel, my son, and make your peace with God.

(As Will kneels, the Palmer draws aside his robe, revealing a sword.)

WILL: *(rising while drawing the sword, and the Palmer, at the same time, drawing a second sword)* God will have to wait at least a few minutes more.

SHERIFF: Why it's the outlaw Robin Hood! Seize him!

(In the ensuing sword fight, for which the Sheriff shows limited enthusiasm, Robin and Will escape.)

Act Two

Scene 1 -- *Robin and Marian are discovered at a festival at Gamwell Hall*

Robin Hood

Maid Marian

Sir Guy of Gisbourne

Two archers

Friar Tuck

Festival goers

(An outdoor festival at Gamwell Hall. All are dressed as foresters, except Friar Tuck, who is in robes and has a jug of ale. Three Archers are taking turns firing arrows at a target -- two are foresters; the other is Marian. As they fire, Robin calls out the score. Each of Marian's shots is a bull's-eye, as follows, repeating as necessary.)

(Archer 1 fires his bow.)

ROBIN: Blue! *(Alternatively, red, yellow, white, or missed)*

(Archer 2 fires his bow.)

Missed! *(Alternatively, red, yellow, white, or blue)*

(Marian fires her bow.)

Bull's eye!

(As the contest continues, the oafish Sir Guy of Gisbourne enters opposite the archers. He takes a keen interest in the target, and from across the stage, the archers -- Marian in particular.)

GUY: *following one of Marian's shots:* Hold, there!

ROBIN: Your pardon, sir. We are keeping score.

GUY: So am I.

(The contest continues for one more round.)

GUY: Hold, now! In the name of King John!

ROBIN: *(gesturing that the archers should stop)* Who comes in the King's name? Are you a warden, perhaps?

GUY: You could say that.

ROBIN: Well then, warden. You have my word. It's just a friendly contest. The King's deer are perfectly safe.

GUY: I'm not worrying over the King's deer. I am Sir Guy of Gisbourne. I am looking for one of his Majesty's subjects. A lady who is missing. King John has entrusted me to find her.

FRIAR: *(drunk)* No surprise there. If I were the King's lady, I'd go missing.

GUY: *(unamused)* It's not the King's lady. It is the lady Marian Fitzwalter. *Gesturing to Marian,* Who is this lady?

FRIAR: Oh now you believe me, my Lord. That's no lady.

MARIAN: *(after giving the Friar a sidelong glance)* My name is Clorinda.

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GUY: Clorinda?

MARIAN: Yes.

GUY: Charming name. Where are you from, Clorinda?

MARIAN: Oh, these parts.

GUY: And what do you do in these parts?

MARIAN: I tend sheep.

GUY: You wield a fine bow for a shepherdess.

ROBIN: *(stepping in front of Marian)* Oh, no, sir. It's just a bit of luck on a fair day. I don't imagine Clorinda could hit that target again if she tried... could you, Clorinda?

(Marian, giving Robin a defiant look and nudging him aside, fires an arrow.)

FRIAR: *(reeling slightly)* Bull's Eye! Well done, Clorinda. The sheep would be proud.

ROBIN: *(again putting himself between the others and Guy)* My Lord, I have a confession.

GUY: Do you?

ROBIN: We have deceived you.

GUY: Have you?

ROBIN: Yes, my lord.

GUY: How so?

ROBIN: *(taking a deep breath and gesturing toward the target)* It's a trick target, sire. The bull's-eye is like the side of a barn. It's nearly impossible to miss.

GUY: It's a trick target?

ROBIN: Yes, my lord.

GUY: *(gesturing to the other two Archers)* And these two fine gentlemen, how did they manage to miss?

ROBIN: *(bashful)* They were being kind, sir.

GUY: They were being kind.

ROBIN: Yes, sir.

GUY: To whom were they being kind?

ROBIN: Why, to Clorinda, sir.

GUY: They were being kind to Clorinda?

ROBIN: *(whispering to Guy)* She's fancies herself quite a good shot, my lord.

GUY: Before I arrest all of you, let me get this straight. Clorinda...

FRIAR: *(interrupting)* The shepherdess.

GUY: Yes. Forgive me. Clorinda the shepherdess thinks she is a very good shot, but in truth, the rest of you organized a trick target and conspired to miss on purpose, so that she could win the contest, right?

FRIAR: Oh, sire. She's a bear when she loses.

(Guy makes to draw his sword, but Robin raises his hand to intervene.)

ROBIN: It's the truth, my lord, as true as I stand before you. Every shot's a bull's-eye, it's all in good fun.

(As he speaks, he ushers the others aside, takes one of the bows and takes up the position opposite the target, except he has his back to the target and therefore to Guy.)

Just watch, sir.

(He fires over his shoulder.)

FRIAR: Bull's eye! Well done, Robin!

GUY: Robin Hood!

(Guy raises his sword high to advance; at the same time, Marian drops to one knee and fires an arrow, knocking the sword free by striking Guy's hand. Injured, Guy exits.)

Farewell, Lady Fitzwalter. I will return for you.

Scene 2 -- *Sir Guy of Gisbourne arrives at Lord Fitzwalter's manor to arrest Maid Marian; she feigns being kidnapped by Robin Hood to escape.*

Sir Robert Fitzwalter

Harold (Fitzwalter's Elderly Attendant)

Maid Marian

Sir Guy of Gisbourne

The King's Men (soldiers)

*(A NOTE to the historically inclined: at his breakfast table, Lord Fitzwalter is drinking tea, which would not yet have made an appearance in England for a few hundred years; but in *The Once and Future King*, Sir Ector drinks port -- which is even further off, in historical terms, probably 500 years -- when playing to an American audience, tea and port are just what English people drink.)*

*(To the right, Lord **Fitzwalter** is seated at a small breakfast table opposite an empty chair. Among the items on the table are two teacups.)*

HAROLD: *(who is very old, hunched and confused, entering from the right carrying a teapot)* Lord Fitzwalter, your tea.

FITZWALTER: Thank you, Harold.

*(Harold exits right. Sir **Guy** of Gisbourne enters from the left. His hand is bandaged from having been struck by **Marian's** arrow. He stops and looks left, right, then up, as though impeded by a high wall. He knocks on an imaginary door. **Fitzwalter** seems not to notice. **Guy** knocks again, then growing impatient, knocks a third time.)*

FITZWALTER: Harold?

HAROLD: *(re-entering from the right)* My lord?

FITZWALTER: Someone is knocking down at the gate.

HAROLD: Yes, my lord. *Pause.* More tea?

(Guy of Gisbourne knocks again.)

FITZWALTER: No tea, thank you. I was more thinking that one of us might go down and see who it is?

HAROLD: Who what is?

FITZWALTER: Who it is who is knocking?

HAROLD: Knocking, sir?

FITZWALTER: Down below. At the gate.

HAROLD: Yes, my lord. *Exits to the right, apparently ignoring the request.*

(Guy of Gisbourne knocks again.)

FITZWALTER: *calmly:* Harold?

HAROLD: *(entering from the right carrying the teapot, and having forgotten his first entrance)* Lord Teawater, your fitz.

FITZWALTER: *(covering his teacup with his hand)* No tea, thank you, Harold.

(Harold turns to leave, only stopped by Fitzwalter's words)

Harold, there is someone down at the gate.

HAROLD: How's that, sir? I cannot see the gate from here.

FITZWALTER: I heard knocking.

HAROLD: Should I go and have a look?

FITZWALTER: Capital idea, Harold. Please go and have a look.

(Harold heads left with the teapot. At center stage, he looks down then plods around in a small circle two or three times, as though descending a spiral staircase. He finally reaches the bottom, then crosses left until he is opposite Guy. The two are separated by an imaginary door.)

HAROLD: *(sliding open a narrow slot window and peering through)* Hello?

GUY: *(frustrated)* Open this door in the name of the King!

HAROLD: How's that?

GUY: Open this door! I come in the name of the King!

HAROLD: *(forlorn, looks at the door)* Do you have the key?

GUY: Imbecile. Go and fetch Lord Fitzwalter!

HAROLD: You want me to fitz Lord Fetchwalter?

GUY: Fetch Lord Fitzwalter! He will have the key. Go and get the key. The key!

HAROLD: *(holding the pot up to the slot)* Tea?

GUY: Key!

HAROLD: Tea?

GUY: I don't want any tea!

(Harold slides the slot window closed, shrugs, turns back to the spiral staircase, plods back up the stairs, crosses to the table, puts the teapot on the table and takes a seat.)

FITZWALTER: *(following a long pause)* Harold?

HAROLD: My lord?

FITZWALTER: Is there someone at the gate?

HAROLD: Yes, my lord. But he doesn't want any tea.

FITZWALTER: *(Pause)* How do you know?

HAROLD: Why, I asked him, my lord, just as pretty as that, would you like some tea?

FITZWALTER: *(repeating Harold's words in an attempt to make sense of them)* ...would you like some tea?

HAROLD: Oh yes, my lord, thank you, sir.

(Pours himself a cup of tea. Guy of Gisbourne bangs on the door as hard as he can.)

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FITZWALTER: He's still knocking.

HAROLD: I can't imagine why, my lord.

FITZWALTER: Maybe you could go and ask him?

(Harold reluctantly puts down his teacup, takes up the teapot and makes to go.)

Harold...

(Harold pauses.)

Leave the teapot here.

HAROLD: *(puts the teapot back on the table and makes his way back downstairs to the door. He slides open the slot window)* Hello?

GUY: Where is Lord Fitzwalter?

HAROLD: Having breakfast, sir.

GUY: Open this door! I must speak with him at once.

HAROLD: *(looks at the door)* Do you have the key?

GUY: Now you listen to me, you impudent stooge. I am Sir Guy of Gisbourne. I come in the name of King John. I am here for the lady Marian Fitzwalter. Go and tell your master that his daughter shot me with an arrow, that she consorts with the outlaw Robin Hood, and that she is under arrest.

HAROLD: She is undressed?

GUY: She is under arrest! I will return with a legion of the King's men, and if the Lady Marian does not surrender, I will take this castle by force!

HAROLD: *(nodding)* Is that all?

GUY: *(a little abashed)* Yes. That is all.

(Harold slides the window shut and returns upstairs while Guy exits left. When he arrives upstairs, Harold quietly takes his seat at the table.)

FITZWALTER: Who was it?

HAROLD: A gentleman, sir.

FITZWALTER: What did he want?

HAROLD: I'm not sure, sir. Something about a sparrow.

FITZWALTER: A sparrow?

HAROLD: Yes. It seems that the lady Marian shot a sparrow, and a legion of the King's men are going to storm the castle because she is undressed.

FITZWALTER: *(gives Harold a long, patient look, then)* It's half past ten, Harold. I am sure that Lady Marian is dressed. Please fetch her for me?

HAROLD: It's a bit of a worry, sir. The gentleman seemed most very sure of himself. What if he's right?

FITZWALTER: Just stand outside her chamber and bid her to come join me.

(Whispering)

Don't look inside, stay by the door.

(Waits for Harold to get up, then urging him on.)

...there's a good fellow.

(Harold exits right; after a moment, Marian enters from the same exit. She is dressed like a perfect lady.)

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- The Sheriff of Nottingham by *Michael Megliola*
A New Hampshire Theatre Project Young People's Playscript

MARIAN: (*smiling at Fitzwalter and crossing to the table*) Is this tea for me?

FITZWALTER: It was for Harold.

MARIAN: (*examining the teacup*) Oh, well. Not the first thing he's forgotten. Did you need something, father?

FITZWALTER: May I ask you a question?

MARIAN: Of course.

FITZWALTER: Where have you been these last few days?

MARIAN: In my chamber, father. Spinning wool.

FITZWALTER: You were not, perhaps, out and about?

MARIAN: You know that I would not go out without your leave, father.

FITZWALTER: Good, good. That is what a father wants to hear from his daughter.

MARIAN: (*getting up to leave*) Well good morning, then.

FITZWALTER: Good morning, dear,

(Before she can exit...)

Marian?

MARIAN: Father?

FITZWALTER: One more question. Have you been off shooting a bow?

MARIAN: A bow, father? Me?

FITZWALTER: Yes, you know, a bow.

MARIAN: Not I, father.

FITZWALTER: Marian, dear. Remember the time with the horse?

MARIAN: (*looks down*) I only rode once.

FITZWALTER: Once... the whole way to Cambridge, all by yourself, and for what?

MARIAN: For a book, sire.

FITZWALTER: For a book for a girl who claims she can't read.

MARIAN: Of course I can't, sire. I am a lady.

FITZWALTER: And those circles and lines that you draw, what witchcraft is that?

MARIAN: Geometry, sire. It's practiced by ancient witches. Mostly Greek.

FITZWALTER: And for the last time, daughter, where did you get the astrolabe?

MARIAN: I've told you a thousand times, I never saw it before and I don't know how it got there.

FITZWALTER: I found it under your pillow.

MARIAN: (*shrugs*) Might've been the witchcraft. Sometimes the spells go all wrong.

FITZWALTER: That might account for the abacus as well, and the snowy owl missing from the mews these many weeks...

MARIAN: It's a sadness, keeping the poor thing cooped up like that.

FITZWALTER: I'll tell you of a sadness. If I were to go and find the sergeant-at-arms, and escort him to the keep, and make a careful count, are you telling me that not one arrow would be missing?

MARIAN: On my honor, father, not one.

FITZWALTER: And the bows would be just as he left them?

MARIAN: I wouldn't know how the sergeant leaves his bows.

FITZWALTER: So this friend of yours, he lent you a bow?

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- The Sheriff of Nottingham by Michael Megliola
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MARIAN: *(starting to speak, then catching herself, then continuing)* It's my bow, I won it fair and square. He keeps it for me.

FITZWALTER: You didn't, well, shoot someone... did you? A gentleman, perhaps?

MARIAN: Father, why would I waste my time hunting gentlemen? There are so few of them. *Pause.* I may have slightly shot a cad, but it was only a touch.

FITZWALTER: The cad is bringing an army to arrest you.

MARIAN: Arrest me? It's you they want, father. It is an open secret that you harbor no love for King John.

FITZWALTER: On the contrary, Marian. The King is so feeble that we barons, more and more, have authority that is rightly ours. Over these past few months, I've grown rather fond of King John.

(Pause.)

Just for the record, which cad did you shoot?

MARIAN: Guy of Gisbourne, and for the record, I shot the hilt of his sword. He just happened to be holding it, that's all.

FITZWALTER: That's more than enough.

(Standing.)

Now you listen to me, and do exactly as I tell you. You will let Harold take you up into the tower and lock you away. When Gisbourne returns, I will tell him upon my honor, as an Englishman, that there you have been for a fortnight, and never out of my sight, as a precaution against the mischief of that scoundrel Robin Hood.

MARIAN: He will demand to take me.

FITZWALTER: King John himself could not take my daughter from my home.

MARIAN: Father, please. They will arrest you. You will be tried as a traitor.

FITZWALTER: Oh, child. I'll never live beneath the thumb of a petty tyrant.

(Guy reappears from the left, at the imaginary door, accompanied by the Sheriff and several soldiers. He knocks loudly.)

To the tower! Now!

MARIAN: If I escape, father, we may both be saved.

(Guy knocks again.)

FITZWALTER: Enough of this nonsense, do as you're told.

(Heads left and down the spiral stairs as Marian exits to the right. Arriving at the door and sliding open the slot window.)

Who's knocking?

GUY: Sir Guy of Gisbourne, faithful servant of King John.

FITZWALTER: *(sliding back the bolt and opening the door)* Come in, Sir Guy. Well hello, Sheriff. Come inside, you'll catch your death out there in the cold.

SHERIFF: *(entering)* Robert Fitzwalter, it is my duty to inform you that your daughter the Lady Marian is wanted for assault and treason. She is to be remanded to my custody.

FITZWALTER: I'm sorry, gentlemen, I do not know you well. Is this a joke, or a mistake?

GUY: It is neither, sir. The Lady Marian shot me in the hand as I apprehended that foul creature Robin Hood!

FITZWALTER: Congratulations, sir! You apprehended Robin Hood? It is against that very threat that I have

kept my daughter Marian locked safe in our tower these past two weeks. Surely, the King seeks that man Robin, and not an innocent maiden?

SHERIFF: The man and the maiden were meant to be married, sir.

FITZWALTER: Oh, but by the grace of King John, they were not! And now you have captured the villain, why, sir I owe you a debt of honor! We all do! By your grace, and that of our noble King, my family and household are safe.

GUY: Sir Robert. The scoundrel escaped, and only because you're daughter loosed an arrow and knocked away my sword.

FITZWALTER: I am telling you, on my honor, as an Englishman, she never left this house.

SHERIFF: Enough of your insolence. Men, ascend the tower and bring the Lady Marian to me.

(The soldiers push past and clamber up the stairs, followed by Fitzwalter, then the Sheriff and Guy. The soldiers exit right; Fitzwalter, the Sheriff and Guy stop at the breakfast table. Meanwhile, Marian, dressed again as a forester, creeps into view from the left, outside the door. She eases the imaginary door aside and sneaks in. The soldiers re-enter from the left.)

SOLDIER: She's gone, sir.

FITZWALTER: She can't be gone. She was here when you arrived.

GUY: Fitzwalter, in the name of the King, I hold you accountable!

FITZWALTER: Me? I hold you accountable! Where is my daughter?

MARIAN: *in the deepest voice she can muster, calling up the staircase:* Sherwood Forest!

FITZWALTER: It's Robin Hood!

(The soldiers scramble down the stairs, but Marian has the jump on them. She stops, taking cover at the door jam, and fires an arrow into the base of the spiral staircase, sending the soldiers reeling and crashing into the pursuing Guy. By the time they sort themselves out, she is gone, exit left.)

FITZWALTER: Guy of Gisbourne! You brought that animal Robin Hood into my home! He followed you here – for you I unlocked the door – she was safe until you showed up! Go and find them!

(Lights down.)

Scene 3 -- *Marian encounters Robin Hood in the forest.*

Robin Hood

Maid Marian

(It is past dusk in the forest. Marian enters from the left, still dresses as a forester, with her hair tucked beneath her cap. She is trying to be steady, but she is spooked by every small noise. Robin enters from the right, quietly. Marian does not see him.)

ROBIN: Well, then.

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MARIAN: *(wheeling around to face him)* Who's there?

ROBIN: Steady, squire. I'll ask the questions.

MARIAN: *(backing away)* Robin Hood.

ROBIN: *(easing his sword from its sheath)* If we're to be calling people names, let's start with yours, shall we?

MARIAN: *(brandishing her sword)* Sir Guy of Gisbourne sent me.

ROBIN: *(advancing)* Sir Guy should not send a lad to do his bidding.

*(A short sword fight ensues; **Marian** knocks **Robin's** sword away.)*

ROBIN: *(immediately realizing who **Marian** is)* Marian! You're safe!

MARIAN: *(removing her cap)* I was kidnapped by that brave scoundrel Robin Hood.

ROBIN: My then, has he earned your favor?

MARIAN: *(retrieving **Robin's** sword and returning it to him)* He might have, had he shown up in person.

(Exits.)

ROBIN: *(following)* Marian! Wait!

(Lights down.)

12 more pages make up the Interlude and Acts 3 & 4.