

ROBIN HOOD

Series One, Episode One

Will You Tolerate This?

written by Dominic Minghella

directed by John McKay

**This is not an official copy. This was typed up by a fan
of the show strictly for personal enjoyment.**

CAST

Robin Hood	Jonas Armstrong
Marian	Lucy Griffiths
Guy of Gisborne	Richard Armitage
Sheriff of Nottingham	Keith Allen
Little John	Gordon Kennedy
Much	Sam Troughton
Allan A Dale	Joe Armstrong
Will Scarlett	Harry Lloyd
Edward	Michael Elwyn
Forrest	Mark Bagnall
Roy	William Beck
Hanton	Josh Cole
Dan Scarlett	Sean Murray
Luke Scarlett	Jonathan Readwin
Benedict Giddens	Josef Altin
Jeffrey	John Ramm
Thornton	John Carlisle
Hannah	Emily Butterfield
Fuller	Adam Smethurst
Sarah	Bethany Turner
Jailer	Mark Phoenix
Chief Sheriff's Man	John Wark
Sheriff's Man 1	Finlay Robertson
(Sheriff's Man 2)	Alex Hassell
Loughborough	Peter Linka
Woodvale	Michael Mehlman
Gisborne's Man 1	Matt Devere
Female Villager	Beatrice Zentai
Canon Richard	John Rado

Scene One

Nottinghamshire, England, 1192.

Sherwood Forest.

Allan A Dale is aiming an arrow at a deer when he hears a horse whinny behind him. He turns and sees the Sheriff's men on horseback. He turns around as more horsemen appear. Allan stands quietly, then suddenly breaks and runs, dropping his bow. The horsemen pursue.

Allan runs through the trees, checking behind him, until his way is blocked by thicket of still-leafless bushes. The soldiers grab him and bring him before their chief.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

Hold him! *to Allan:* You know the law.

ALLAN

I know the law's an ass.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

The price for one of the King's deer is your right hand.
Let's go.

ALLAN

No. Please, have mercy. My wife...

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

What?

ALLAN

My wife expects a child. We have no food. She must eat or w-w-we will lose the baby.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

And then, when she has the baby, you will say you must steal because you have another mouth to feed. Bring him!

ALLAN

Please, no, I need my hand!

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

We can punish you now.

Allan's guard, Sheriff's Man 1, is smiling in anticipation.

If you admit your guilt and save us the time, the punishment is lessened. We can take a finger. But you will have no right to trial, no defence, no appeal.

ALLAN

I will lose a trial... and my hand. *Thinks a moment.* Take a finger.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

Quickly, quietly: Do it.

SHERIFF'S MAN 1

Mouths an excited "Yes!" Come on.

The soldiers holding Allan lead him to a fallen tree.

Holding a small axe: Pop your hand on there... like this.

Sheriff's Man 1 spreads his fingers out on the log, wiggling them, then taps the butt of the axe on the log next to them. Sheriff's Man 2 is giddy with anticipation.

ALLAN

No, I've changed my mind.

SHERIFF'S MAN 1

No appeal.

Sheriff's Man 1 continues to wiggle his fingers and then an arrow suddenly pierces the log between his thumb and forefinger.

What the...?

Two more arrows land between his fingers, then two more inside his wrist.

SHERIFF'S MAN 1

Who's there?!

Robin's voice floats from seemingly nowhere.

ROBIN

Flippantly, arrogantly: Seems I missed your hand.

Robin is standing behind a tree with his back to it, his shoulders barely visible on either side of the trunk.

Let him go before my aim improves!

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

His eyes flickering, looking for the interrupter: Show yourself!
You interfere with the law of the land!

Robin comes out from behind the tree with his face hidden in a black hood and with a quiver of striped-fletched arrows on his back. He slowly steps towards the group, an arrow nocked in his downward-pointing, strangely curved bow.

ROBIN

With determination and controlled temper: The last time I looked, the law punished poaching with a tanning or a spell in the stocks.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

The law is under threat and must be severe if it is to be

respected.

ROBIN

Still advancing: If the law wants respect, shouldn't the punishment fit the crime?

Allan is enjoying this exchange, but is subtly looking around for Robin's reinforcements.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

I do not make the law. I do not decide.

ROBIN

But you enforce it. *Stops.* And my men and I suggest that you decide to go on your way.

The trees and bushes start moving and the chief and the guards look around wildly.

SHERIFF'S MAN 1

They've got us surrounded, sir.

Behind a rise, Much lies hidden. In each hand he holds the end of a string. The strings have been wound around tree branches and bushes so that when he pulls on them, the foliage moves. He tugs on the strings again, one at a time.

ROBIN

And let this man feed his hungry wife.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

Uncertainly: I don't know—

ROBIN

Interrupting firmly: You know!

Robin raises his bow and shoots an arrow up into the sky. Everybody looks up at the disappearing shaft.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

And what does that prove?

After a moment, the arrow lands straight down in the saddle in front of the chief, narrowly missing his face. He spreads his arms wide in surprise.

ROBIN

Feigning disappointment: Missed again.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

Through his teeth: Let him go.

ALLAN

to Robin, smiling: God bless you, sir. *Turns.* Bless you all, gents. *Steps over the log and leaves between the chief and*

Robin.

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

Come. *Pulls the arrow out of his saddle.* We leave these rogues to their crimes.

Much throws down the strings and goes to join Robin as the soldiers mount their horses and leave.

MUCH

Us? Rogues? Don't show your faces here again! *Shouts:* Cowards!

ROBIN

Pulls his hood forward to his chest and whispers: Shhh! Quiet!

MUCH

Why? We have won and they should be [*shouts:*] ashamed! Shame on you! Come back here again and my master and I

Robin rolls his eyes.

shall see that you leave with more than just your tails between your legs!

CHIEF SHERIFF'S MAN

Stops his horse. "My master and I." There are only two of them!

MUCH

I shouldn't have said that.

Robin shakes his head slightly in disbelief, watching as the horsemen come galloping back down the hill.

Run, Robin? Run?

Robin and Much turn around and run.

OPENING CREDITS

Robin and Much run through the forest pursued by the horsemen. Robin, who is the faster of the two, gets ahead of his servant. Much runs over a rise, trips and falls down the other side near a large tree. Robin pulls him back into the shelter of its exposed roots and pulls a large piece of brush in front of them. The horsemen gallop past on either side and disappear.

MUCH

Whispers: Clever, master.

Robin puts his hand over Much's mouth. They both watch warily as a single horseman comes over the rise, walks past

food?

The fuller starts to turn towards the barn, but Much puts his hand on the fuller's arm to keep his attention away from Robin.

MUCH

Really? That is interesting.

The fuller looks offensively at Much's hand.

Because he's a fair-minded old man. *Stares at Robin agape.*

FULLER

I told you, we've a new, younger— You're not listening.

The fuller turns around to follow Much's gaze at the barn, sees Robin kissing Sarah and his temper rises. He runs to the barn, grabbing his sword from a tub on the way.

MUCH

Hoarsely: Robin!

Robin hears the fuller grunt with effort and his sword swing through the air. He ducks down, pulling Sarah down with him.

FULLER

My daughter! I'll kill you!

The fuller swings his sword again. Robin jumps back and the sword hits a post and gets tangled in the hanging cloth.

ROBIN

I meant no offence.

Robin pushes the fuller's turned back.

I do not wish to fight.

Robin grabs a long-handled metal spoon and a metal bowl as Sarah cowers behind the table.

FULLER

Well, bad luck! I do!

Robin blocks the fuller's blow with the spoon then hits him in the face with the bowl. Much, in a panic, runs to their packs as Robin blocks, then ducks another swing. Much pulls on the hilt of Robin's weapon, but it is stuck in its scabbard. Robin steps backward to a more open area.

You picked the wrong man to mess with. I did not always work cloth. I once worked metal. And I was never beaten with a sword. Not by a knight, not by a knave.

Much continues to pull on Robin's sword. The fuller charges Robin, who blocks with the spoon, turning aside as he does so, then grabs a small barrel lid. He parries the fuller's blow with the spoon while turning around to face him again.

ROBIN

Much!

Robin sidesteps a couple blows, then the fuller swings overhead. Robin doesn't flinch, knowing the sword will hit the beam over their heads, then kicks the fuller squarely in the chest. Much finally pulls a sleek Saracen scimitar free.

MUCH

Master!

Much tosses it to Robin, who deftly catches it and spins it once to get a proper grip. He points it at his foe and glides in front of the flight of stairs to the upper storey, then takes a defensive stance. The fuller makes several menacing moves with his sword, pointing and thrusting, then waits, ready, as Much stands several paces behind Robin, watching his back to a post. Robin spins his scimitar round and round, then stands ready. The fuller charges. Sarah screams and runs up the steps. Much flails in panic and watches in horror as Robin remains perfectly still, holding his scimitar out, forcing the fuller to stop in his tracks or risk running his throat onto the outstretched blade.

ROBIN

Much! Fetch the packs. Run!

Much forces himself to breathe and heads for their gear. The fuller knocks away Robin's scimitar and advances, swinging madly. Robin blocks twice, then crosses blades and twists his up and around, forcing the fuller's sword to the floor. Robin swings out arbitrarily to give himself time to turn and run up the steps two at a time as the fuller's next blow lands on a wooden tread. The fuller mounts the stairs. Near the top, Robin pulls a sack lying near the edge down at the fuller, giving him another moment to reach the top and prepare himself, standing next to Sarah. The fuller continues up, Robin swings at him and the fuller blocks, then swings a punch. Robin ducks, but stands up to find the fuller's sword at his neck.

Whoa, sir, sir, you have me. Allow me one final request.

FULLER

What's that?

ROBIN

Glances at Sarah. One last kiss.

Robin pushes the fuller's sword away with his and kisses Sarah, then breaks away and does a back flip off the floor onto the ground below. Sarah watches as the fuller steps to the edge. Robin and Much start running away, Robin laughing devilishly.

FULLER

Come back you lot! You can't do that!

MUCH

I told you! I said no stopping! Why do you never, ever listen?

ROBIN

Pressing Much's back: Faster! Go!

† † † † † † † † † † † † † † † †

Sherwood Forest. Night.

Robin squats by the fire, getting it going. He tosses an extra stick away, holds his hands over it to warm them, then stands, rubbing his hands together. He pulls his cloak tightly round him, sighs deeply and glances up at the stars. Much looks at him sideways in sullen silence and Robin turns his head towards him. Much looks away, still angry with Robin for ruining his reward of roast pork.

MUCH

A bit pompously: I'm not saying anything.

ROBIN

Sneers and repeats under his breath: Not saying anything.

Robin shakes his head, irked that Much is still holding a grudge and also a bit angry with himself for disappointing his friend.

† † † † † † † † † † † † † † † †

Scene Four

Locksley. The next morning.

Robin and Much walk quickly down the hill towards Locksley. They stop at the sight of home and the people going about their work, and Robin pulls Much into a hug, tears of joy and relief in their eyes. Much goes on ahead as Robin stares for a moment before following. His hand gently grasps a flowering bush and he lets the branch slide through his hand as he walks.

At the edge of the village, Much addresses a villager at the well.

MUCH

Raising his arm in greeting: Hey there!

The man, startled by the stranger, knocks his bucket off the edge of the well and runs into his cottage, closing the door behind him. Robin and Much frown at each other, puzzled by his odd behaviour, and continue to walk into the suddenly deserted village. A woman sees them and also disappears into her cottage in fear.

Where is everybody?

Dan Scarlett is the only one remaining, sawing at a thin log and using one foot to hold it still. Robin hears the noise of the saw and turns to him.

ROBIN

Dan Scarlett?

Dan stops the saw and looks up, but says nothing.

Dan, it's me, Robin!

DAN

Uncertainly: Robin?

ROBIN

Smiles. Yes!

DAN

Smiles and steps around the log. Is it really you?

ROBIN

Of course it's us!

MUCH

We are home unscathed. Well, scathed. Very scathed. But happy. And hungry. Mostly hungry.

DAN

Smiling brightly: Blessed Mary, it is you!

Dan extends his arms wide, then realises his bandaged hand is

exposed. He hugs Robin anyway.

ROBIN

Nods at Dan's hand. An accident?

DAN

Slaps the butt of his arm into his palm. An incident.

Robin nods.

No matter. What's done is done.

ROBIN

Tell me.

DAN

Looks back at the watchtower. Guy of Gisborne runs your estate for the Sheriff.

ROBIN

Does he.

Robin and Much exchange glances.

DAN

We have one tithing after another for the King in the Holy Land. Making ends meet, it's... It was wrong, but my boys, they took some game. I went to stop them, but so did Gisborne's lot. They got caught. Me too. Someone had to lose a hand.

Robin hangs his head and stabs the end of his bow into the ground.

Better me than Will, or little Lukey. I'm old. They've got years ahead of them.

ROBIN

With indignation: This is madness. You are a skilled man... *turns and extends his arm out towards the village...* you built half this village. I won't have this. You will be compensated.

DAN

I see my boys in good health and I am happy.

Dan's cottage door opens to reveal Luke with an armful of firewood. He sees the strangers and immediately heads back inside.

It's all right, boys! This is Master Robin.

ROBIN

Kindly to Luke: You're all right! *Motioning with his arm:* Come on!

Luke drops his wood, grabs his bow from inside the door and takes an arrow from a table outside it. Will steps into the doorway with a piece of firewood in each hand and a stalk of wheat in his teeth.

LUKE

Showing Robin: This is my bow. My dad made it for me.

Dan smiles proudly.

W-w-why has yours got those curves in it?

ROBIN

Holds up his bow. Well, this is a Saracen bow. *Traces the curve with his finger.* It is recurved. The bows straighten [*draws bow*] when you draw. *Proudly:* Makes it small, but powerful.

LUKE

Smiles in admiration. Is it true you can, er, hit a man from a mile away? If I practise everyday, I'll be able to do that.

ROBIN

Well, let's hope you never have to shoot a man, Luke.

Dan dips his head in agreement.

LUKE

Yeah. That's what Dad says. I bet you killed loads of men when you were fighting with the King.

Robin glances at Dan, then down, not wanting to talk about it.

Look.

Luke nocks the arrow in his bow as Will takes a couple steps towards them.

ROBIN

OK, keep your chin up.

Luke aims and draws.

And remember to t—

The arrow flies, missing its target.

To take a breath first. *Chuckles.*

LUKE

Wait, wait.

Luke goes to get another arrow from the table as Will drops his wood.

ROBIN

Charles. Thomas.

Thomas, standing outside the door, bows. Robin enters the house looking up at a tapestry above the stairs, as Hannah and Thornton smile brightly. Thornton reaches out to him, then remembers his place and retracts his arms.

Turns to Thornton. Thornton.

THORNTON

Welcome back, sir.

Robin steps forward and gives him a large hug. Thornton reacts to the tight squeeze. He gives a command to Hannah, who then runs upstairs to obey

A bath for the master, Hannah, and, er, fresh clothes immediately. *Calling towards the back of the house:* Mary!

MUCH

And me, too.

THORNTON

Puzzled: Pardon?

ROBIN

Thornton... *glances at Much...* Much is no longer my manservant.

THORNTON

Oh?

ROBIN

Happily: In recognition of his services to me in the [*claps his hand on Much's shoulder*] Holy Land, he is to be made a free man!

Much stands taller.

I am granting him the fields and lodge at Bonchurch. Until then, he is a guest in my house.

Thornton nods slightly in surprise but agreement.

MUCH

Flipping Robin's bow off his shoulder: And I would like a plate of something, while I bathe. *Hands the bow to Thornton.*

THORNTON

Clearly not pleased to be taking orders from Much, but obeying respectfully: Very well.

Much walks past Thornton, heading to the rooms behind him.

That is the way to the servants' quarters.

MUCH

Stops and turns around. I knew that.

Thornton scowls at Much, who goes upstairs as Gisborne enters the manor. Thornton turns back just in time to see him and quickly steps back out of his way as Gisborne stands in front of him, facing Robin.

GISBORNE

Welcome back, Locksley.

Robin glowers at him, eyes narrowed in contempt.

Now, I have kept your lands for you. I have managed your estates to the best of my ability under the guidance of the Sheriff. *Steps towards Robin.* And I would appreciate more respect in front of the populace.

ROBIN

How many years have you been here?

GISBORNE

Three years, four winters.

ROBIN

And yet you still do not have the respect of the populace?

GISBORNE

Inhales sharply. My men and I will leave directly for Nottingham. *Steps towards the door.*

ROBIN

My servants will help you pack.

GISBORNE

Turns back to Robin at the door: How was the Holy Land?

ROBIN

Drops eye contact with Gisborne. Bloodthirsty. *Walks away towards the back of the room.*

GISBORNE

Comes back in a step. I understand the King is winning, thanks be to God.

ROBIN

Stops and turns to face Gisborne. He's killing more people.

GISBORNE

Ah, is that not winning?

ROBIN

Show me an argument ever settled with bloodshed and

Scene Seven

Locksley Manor. Exterior.

Some villagers are leaving the manor as Robin and Much return. Three women pass them. Behind them Jeffrey leaves with his wife and two young children, juggling eggs.

VILLAGER WOMAN

Bless you, Master Robin. We have all eaten well.

Robin takes her hand as she passes and then lets it go.

MUCH

Is there any food left? I must confess, I am anxious.

JEFFREY

Robin! Robin!

ROBIN

Jeffrey?

JEFFREY

Remember this? Remember this? *High silly voice, holding up a hard-cooked egg:* My egg! my egg, where's it gone? *Pretends to swallow it. Low voice:* You've eaten it. *High:* No, I haven't. *Puts his hand by his ear and reveals the egg. Normally:* Here it is!

Robin slaps Much's stomach and chuckles.

You used to love that when you were a lad.

ROBIN

Bends down to Jeffrey's children. Have you had lots to eat?

The older boy nods.

JEFFREY

to Robin: You're a good boy. Thanks for feeding us. *to the children:* Come on, then. Bring those eggs. Come on!

Jeffrey leaves with his family.

MUCH

Chuckles sarcastically. That man is a show-off. If there are no eggs left, I'm going after him.

Robin notices Dan standing solemnly by the corner of the manor. He walks over to him.

ROBIN

Dan? What's wrong?

Much looks over and follows Robin to Dan.

DAN

Miserably: Young Benedict got frightened. He told Gisborne's lot who took the flour with him.

ROBIN

Knowingly: Your boys.

DAN

They've taken them to Nottingham. *Pleadingly:* Robin...

ROBIN

I will resolve this. I will talk to the Sheriff, I promise.

Robin puts his hand on Dan's shoulder, then continues inside.

† †

Scene Eight

The approach to Nottingham Town. The next morning.

Robin and Much ride on horseback to the town, Robin with no bow or quiver, only his scimitar. At the bridge to the main gate, they notice many peasants under and around it, some with slats for shelters, many with small children.

Nottingham Town.

They ride through the gate and discover not a bustling town, but only a few people going dismally about their business. Much gazes around uneasily.

MUCH

Where is everybody? Funny, Wednesday used to be market day.

ROBIN

Solemnly: I think Wednesday may still be market day.

MUCH

Frowning: Surely some mistake.

Robin and Much stop and dismount in front of the closed castle gates.

† † † † † † † † † † † † † † † †

Scene Nine

Nottingham Castle. Sheriff's quarters.

The Sheriff is cackling heartily as a boy polishes his boots. Gisborne has just informed him of his encounter with Robin.

GISBORNE

Folds his arms, offended at the Sheriff's attitude. My lord, I do not think that this is a laughing matter.

SHERIFF

Sorry, remind me. How many men do you have?

GISBORNE

Sighs deeply, knowing what's coming. Twenty-four.

SHERIFF

And he had?

GISBORNE

One. But the point—

SHERIFF

Interrupting: But you let him take the house.

GISBORNE

Technically, it is still his property.

SHERIFF

La-la-la-di-da. *Laughs again.*

GISBORNE

I would have appreciated more support in this matter.

SHERIFF

Relax, relax. I'll get it back for you within a month.

Gisborne leaves as the Sheriff chuckles.

Twenty-four. One.

† † † † † † † † † † † † † † † †

Scene Ten

Nottingham Castle. Courtyard.

Robin and Much have left their horses in the care of the stable-boys. Two guards escort them through the courtyard.

Robin takes off his gloves as he and Much look up at the four-armed gibbet set up on a large, square platform in the centre of the courtyard. They climb the steps to the main door.

† † † † † † † † † † † † † † † †

The Great Hall.

The Council of Nobles meeting has already started Robin. The long table is set crosswise opposite the doors; the nobles are sitting in chairs arranged in a half-circle facing it. Marian stands behind her father's chair, allowed in only as his nursemaid.

WOODVALE

Stands to the Sheriff: It has been a good month. We've collected nearly £300.

SHERIFF

Shh. Holding a purse, pointing at Woodvale: Would you want to be the King in Antioch... clue: no... trying to feed a starving army on £300? You promised... £500.

WOODVALE

Voice faltering: It's more than we have managed before.

SHERIFF

Scornfully: Oh, yippee. So the King is starving in the Holy Land and you have failed him, but... *in a high-pitched voice:* "It's more than we ever managed before."

GUARD

At the door, announcing: Robin of Locksley.

Everybody looks up as Robin makes a brazen entrance.

ROBIN

Brightly: Good morning, everyone!

Robin comes downstairs and tosses his cape on a guard's up-right halberd at the bottom.

Nodding at the Sheriff: Sheriff...

The Sheriff watches, unimpressed, drumming his fingers on the table. Robin stands in front of the centre vacant chair and looks around at all the faces as he unbuckles his sword belt. Much waits behind the chair. The Sheriff scowls at Robin.

In an exaggeratedly careless way: Well, carry on!

Robin tosses the scimitar to Much, who catches it, and sits down.

SHERIFF

Locksley, welcome back. I trust Sir Guy of Gisborne managed your estates to your satisfaction?

Robin leans back into his chair. His tone is pleasantly insolent.

ROBIN

I believe he may have managed them to [*points at the Sheriff*] your satisfaction.

Robin leans his elbow on the arm of the chair and his head on his hand. Gisborne glares at him, inferring Robin's unsaid meaning.

SHERIFF

Some of your peasants are rather unruly, by the way. We have two in custody awaiting punishment.

GISBORNE

Glaring at Robin: Three.

Robin shifts in his chair, stretching both legs out in front of him, eager for his chance to challenge the Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Three? Hard discipline will be a problem. *Points to Robin.* Be warned. *Points to Loughborough.* Loughborough.

LOUGHBOROUGH

Stands. Sheriff, thank you. I can report—

ROBIN

Interrupting: Discipline has never been a problem on my estates.

Loughborough is surprised at the interruption and looks at the Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Times have changed.

ROBIN

Not for the better, it seems.

Loughborough sits down.

SHERIFF

You, of all people, should know that the King needs funds to fight our Holy War.

ROBIN

Is it our Holy War, or is it Pope Gregory's?

Robin, effectively rebuffed, leans back on the wall.

Does it ever work?

ROBIN

Chuckling earnestly: You'd be surprised.

MARIAN

Sarcastically: Amazed!

Marian roughly pushes past Robin and leaves. Robin gazes after her, half-puzzled at her attitude, half-dazed in love all over again.

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Scene Thirteen

Nottingham Castle. Dungeons.

The Jailer leads Robin and Much down the steps. They stop at the bottom.

JAILER

to an assistant: Bring out the Locksley lot.

The Jailer tosses the keys to the assistant. Allan recognises Robin and comes to his cell door.

ALLAN

Hey, jailer! Jailer! That's me! Jailer! Are you listening?

The Jailer ignores him and he and Robin walk past.

I'm from Locksley! Jailer! I'm from Locksley!

† †

Interview room.

The door opens and the Jailer enters. Benedict, Will and Luke are pushed in behind him. Much glares at the Jailer. Robin sits on a bench in front of Much. Benedict and Luke are visibly frightened; Will stands in proud defiance. Robin keeps a straight and stern face.

JAILER

Give your names.

WILL

Will and Luke Scarlett.

ROBIN

What is your crime?

WILL

Living in the wrong place at the wrong time, living under an evil sheriff. Where do our taxes go? They go to Nottingham, to the Sheriff, to his birds—

The Jailer nods to his assistant, who slaps Will forcefully, interrupting his sentence.

JAILER

to Benedict: Name.

BENEDICT

Benedict, son of Richard Giddens, serf of Locksley.

Will fingers his slapped cheek.

ROBIN

What is your crime?

BENEDICT
Stealing flour.

ROBIN
Are you guilty?
Benedict looks down guiltily, saying nothing.

What is your punishment?

BENEDICT
Shaking his head, not looking up: Don't know.
The Jailer reaches up and tugs on his collar. Much interprets the gesture correctly.

MUCH
Hanging? No, surely not.
Robin watches the boys for their reaction. Will's eyes immediately widen, but the others take a moment longer.

LUKE
What?

BENEDICT
Hanging?

LUKE
Beseechingly: Robin...
The Jailer nods to his assistants.

BENEDICT
No.
The boys are pulled out of the room as Benedict and Luke protest.

No! Please, I beg you!

LUKE
They told me you'd save us! My dad told me you'd save us!
Robin scowls at Much as the door closes.

JAILER
Do you mind? We don't tell 'em if it's the dangle. They kick up a hell of a stink.

MUCH
Glaring at the Jailer: For stealing flour. Hanging?

JAILER
The Sheriff wants an example. We've just had word—

ROBIN
Stands up, firmly interrupting the Jailer: I'll be speaking to the Sheriff. Meanwhile, you treat this prisoners well, or you will have me to answer to.
The door opens.

JAILER
You've got one more.
The Jailer goes to the door and brings in Allan, who smiles at Robin as Robin sits down again and sighs glumly.

ROBIN
You're not from Locksley.

ALLAN
Quietly: I know, but you saved me once before.

ROBIN
That was a long way from Nottingham. Here I am known.

ALLAN
Look, you're saving those others, you'll save me. For my wife... my newborn babe. *Tries to look pitiful.*

MUCH
You said your wife was expecting.

ALLAN
Perks up. Nope, she had it!

ROBIN
Your lies today may be your undoing.
Allan glances at the Jailer.

I cannot save the others, and now I fear you will share their fate.

ALLAN
What fate?
Robin stands and leaves the room. Much follows.

to the Jailer: I'm not from Locksley. Did, did I say Locksley? There's been a mistake here. I'm from Rochdale. Rochdale! That's why they call me Allan A Dale!

JAILER
Yeah, and I'm from wild Wales.

The Jailer grabs Allan's shirt as Robin and Much climb the stairs out of the dungeons.

Oh!
ALLAN

JAILER
Throw him in with the Locksley lot!

† †

Scene Fourteen

Nottingham Castle. The Great Hall.

Edward and the nobles sit at the long table. The Sheriff and Gisborne are watching the feast from the balcony, leaning on the railing. Robin, with an austere look on his face, and Much enter behind them. Gisborne scowls smugly at Robin.

SHERIFF
Ah, Huntingdon, you're missing your own feast. *Looks back down.* Rumours abound.

ROBIN
Suppressing his temper: What rumours?

SHERIFF
Not looking at Robin: That you are weak. That you have returned weakened from your exertions in the Holy Land.

MUCH
My master returns with honours, honours from the King.
Robin holds up his hand in front of Much to silence him.

SHERIFF
Glances at Robin. Mmm. Well, the greater honour would have been to have stood and fought with him, surely?

ROBIN
I have visited my peasants in your dungeons. They have committed grave crimes.

MUCH
With disbelief: Master, surely—

ROBIN
Continuing without pause for Much: Which would make all the more compassionate your gesture of pardoning them.

SHERIFF
Looking below: Pardoning them? I will see them hang...
Looks at Robin... in the morning. You yourself said that we risk rebellion. We must have order.

ROBIN
It is custom for the sheriff to hear his nobles' requests for clemency.

SHERIFF
Looking down, spurnfully: La-di-da-di-da.

Gisborne smiles.

Marian wrings her over-large sleeve in her hands. Much glances at Robin, who shakes his head as Edward continues.

Do not make the mistake I and others have made and make your dissent public. Consolidate your position quietly.

ROBIN

I do not have time. Tomorrow I am to order the hanging of four of my own peasants.

EDWARD

It will be the long game, I'm afraid.

ROBIN

Will and Luke Scarlett cannot wait. Benedict Giddens. Allan A Dale.

MARIAN

Unable to hold her tongue any longer: You must let them die. It is a test. Fail it, and there will be consequences.

ROBIN

Perhaps!

MARIAN

Definitely! *Glances at Edward.* This is not a game—

Edward holds up hand to silence Marian.

EDWARD

My daughter speaks when she should not.

Marian quietly shows her indignation and takes a step back.

But she is right. You have no choice, Robin.

In his eyes only, Robin shows his frustration and hopelessness.

Hide your temper, bide your time until you can act decisively... or kiss your lands, if not your life, goodbye.

Robin miserably ponders this.

† † † † † † † † † † † † † † † †

Locksley Manor. Main room. Night.

By the fire, Robin is slumped in a chair, leaning his head on his hand, trying to think of a way to rescue the boys. His head twitches as he gets an idea.

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Scene Sixteen

Nottingham Castle. Courtyard. The next morning.

The four-armed gibbet is set up in the courtyard, just as it was the previous day, only now four nooses hang from the ends. A crowd has gathered to watch the executions. Robin and Much sombrely enter the courtyard and two women yell at him.

OLD WOMAN 1

Spits at Robin's feet. Murderer!

OLD WOMAN 2

Murderer! *Spits in Robin's face.*

Robin stops and wipes off the spittle without any further reaction. He continues walking through the crowd to Dan, but Much remains put.

DAN

Robin, it's not your fault.

The castle doors open to a fanfare and the Sheriff, Gisborne, Canon Richard, and some nobles walk out and line up on the steps. Robin despondently looks up at them. The Sheriff stops halfway down the stairs as Robin trudges to meet him there.

SHERIFF

Lords! Ladies! People of Nottingham!

Robin takes his place between the Sheriff and Gisborne as Marian and Edward watch solemnly from the cloister.

We are gathered here today to witness the carrying out of justice in the name of [*looks up*] God and King Richard. *Through the roll of parchment:* Bring out the prisoners! *Smiles in anticipation.*

The crowd turn to their left to watch the Jailer lead Allan, Will, Luke and Benedict, all with their hands tied behind their backs, down the side stairs to the gallows as the Sheriff continues his speech.

Robin of Locksley, Earl of Huntingdon, having recently returned from the Holy War with a personal commendation from the King himself

Allan tries to make a break for it, but is pulled back by the jailer's assistant.

will read the proclamation.

The Sheriff hands the scroll to Robin, who roughly takes it.

Enjoy.

Allan is pulled up onto the platform by the assistant, followed by the boys.

Quietly to Robin: Oh, and, er, no second thoughts, Locksley, or your friend Much will be dropping in on us as our special guest today.

The Sheriff looks up at the battlements where Much is being held bent over near the edge. Robin looks up at his servant and his shoulders fall, frustrated at himself not realising Much was missing. The Sheriff smiles in wicked satisfaction. Allan and the boys stand bravely as their sentence is read.

ROBIN

Reading off the parchment: "Let it be heard and known about the lands and realms of Richard, His Majesty, King of England, that on this, the twenty-sixth day of April, in the year of our Lord eleven hundred and ninety-two, the following men, having been tried under law and found guilty: Benedict Giddens of Locksley, Will Scarlett of Locksley, Luke Scarlett of Locksley, Allan A Dale of Locksley. These same men have been sentenced to hang by a rope until they are dead."

A drum beats slowly as sacks are placed over the prisoners' heads. The crowd groan.

DAN

Will! Luke!

A noose is tightened round each prisoner's neck. Marian watches in apprehension. Jeffrey, standing next to Dan, dressed in a black cloak and with a fake beard, glances up at the gallows. Their prisoners ready, the executioner and the assistants wait for their signal with arms folded. Jeffrey looks desperately at Robin, who nods almost imperceptibly.

SHERIFF

May the souls—

JEFFREY

Raising his hand and interrupting: Wait!

The drum stops. Robin does his best to seem innocent.

SHERIFF

With exasperation: Oh! Nah, nah, nah, please don't kill my brother, my little baby, my inbred cousin!

JEFFREY

On behalf of Anthony, our bishop, I claim benefit of cler-

gy for these men. *Points towards the gallows.* They cannot hang.

SHERIFF

These are not holy men. These people cannot plead the cloth. Get on with it.

JEFFREY

I came last night to administer their last rites.

The Sheriff looks at the Jailer, who shrugs largely.

SHERIFF

So?

JEFFREY

And each one came to God through me, repenting their sins and asking to take the cloth. I felt duty-bound to consult the bishop, and he, in turn, confers status of novice unto each man.

SHERIFF

Shut up.

JEFFREY

Unfurls a piece of parchment, turns it "right-side up" for effect, then pretends to read: "I, Anthony, very Reverend Vicar Apostolic, hereby confer—

SHERIFF

Interrupting: Shut up!

Jeffrey is silent as the crowd look at the Sheriff, who turns to Canon Richard, standing to the side of the steps.

Is this possible?

CANON RICHARD

They could not have become novices overnight.

JEFFREY

They are become postulants! *Awkwardly:* Novice novices, if you like. *Strongly:* And so are under the protection of the Church.

Jeffrey glances at Robin, who sends an imperceptible smile at him. Jeffrey glances at the Sheriff, then back at Robin. The Sheriff notices this and frowns, turning to stare at Robin, who glances at him, then the Sheriff looks at Jeffrey.

SHERIFF

Novice novices? How novel. Well... *points to the gallows...* hang them... *points to Jeffrey...* and arrest him.

The crowd murmur in disbelief as Jeffrey tries to make a run

for it, but he is quickly caught by the guards, one of whom holds a halberd to his throat. The other pulls off his fake beard. Jeffrey looks apologetically at Robin, who stands with narrowed eyes, internally fuming at their failed plan.

Where's the drum? Pom, pom, pom-pom.

The drumbeat starts again. Dan watches in agony.

Quietly to Robin: Watch and enjoy, Robin. Oh, your priest will talk, and then you will be done for, my friend.

The drumming speeds up.

May the souls of these men find forgiveness in heaven.

The Sheriff nods to the executioner and the four stools are kicked out from under the doomed men. The crowd gasp. Marian is horrified as the Sheriff smiles at Robin, then she turns to go down the corridor past the cloister. Gisborne looks pointedly at Robin before following the Sheriff.

DAN

I love you, boys! I love you, Will! Love you, Luke! I'll see you in heaven!

Robin's mind is thinking back to all the things he's witnessed in the past day: Luke's young innocence, Dan's missing hand, Luke's "you'd save us!", his own hand caressing the bush entering Locksley, Gisborne at Locksley, the Sheriff. His decision made, Robin turns to two archers at his left and attacks the first one with a punch to the stomach. Marian turns her head to watch. The nobles gathered on the steps turn away and crouch down, hoping to avoid the sudden madman. The Sheriff and Gisborne hurry to the cloister to see what the commotion is. Robin punches out the second archer and grabs his longbow and four arrows from his quiver as he falls. Robin steps back, draws and aims at the gallows, holding the other arrows in his other hand along the curve of the bow.

ROBIN

People of Nottingham!

He lines up his shot with his well-practised eye and lets an arrow loose. It splices Allan's rope. Allan falls to the platform and the spectators quickly pull him off, away from the executioners. Dan is astonished. Robin draws, aiming another arrow.

These men have committed no crime worth more than a spell in the stocks.

Robin lets the arrow fly and it cuts Will's rope as the executioners struggle against the crowd to get their prisoners back.

Dan runs forward to help his son.

Drawing his bow horizontally, with two arrows nocked, one on either side of his hand gripping the bow: Will you tolerate this injustice? I, for one, will not.

Robin eyes his shot carefully, then lets the arrows loose. They cut down both Luke and Benedict. The crowd cheer as a guard advances on Robin. Robin throws the bow at the guard, ducks a sword swung at him, grabs the guard's arm on the rebound and kicks the sword from his grip as Marian, the Sheriff and Gisborne watch, frozen in shock. Robin takes out two more guards with his stolen sword as Dan and the crowd take the nooses and hoods off the prisoners.

DAN

This way!

MUCH

Master, help!

Robin stops and looks up at the battlements where the guards are about to push Much off the edge.

SHERIFF

Yield, Locksley, or say farewell to your little mulch.

ROBIN

Looking up at the Sheriff, intensely: His name... is Much.

SHERIFF

Well, he'll be mulch in a moment. *Smiles and looks up at the battlements.*

Robin looks back at Much, steps forward and throws the sword up with all his strength. Spinning round, it turns to horizontal and strikes the two guards in their helmets, passing safely over Much's head, knocking them back and freeing Much. The Sheriff frowns. Dan hands Will a hand axe and turns to embrace Luke.

DAN

Let's go!

Dan leads Luke and Benedict away as Much looks down from the battlements and sees an archer behind Robin lining up a shot.

MUCH

Pointing to the archer: Master, look out!

Robin turns and sees the Bowman. Marian and the Sheriff turn to look, too. Robin raises his hands, defenceless. Marian, glances back and forth between Robin and the archer and realises she must do something to save him. She reaches

Scene Seventeen

Sherwood Forest.

After quickly collecting their belongings from Locksley, the new outlaws set up camp in the forest. In the shadows between the tall rock walls, Will has built a fire and Much has put a rabbit over it to roast.

WILL

I'm just getting some kindling. *Stands and leaves.*

Much sits unhappily beside the fire. Allan and Robin each lean on a elbow on the ground.

MUCH

Staring into the fire: Be honest with me. This... does not bode well for my lodge... my Bonchurch.

Much looks over at Robin, who is sitting beside him repeatedly poking a stick into the ground. Robin looks up at Much and raises his eyebrows as a shrug, then back down.

I knew it.

Allan sits on Robin's other side in a similar pose.

ALLAN

This is your lodge now, my friends. Sherwood Lodge.

MUCH

Sourly: I'm not your friend.

Robin shushes them and looks around. Much looks at Robin. Robin stands up, then looks up on top of the tall wall facing him.

ROY

Excuse me!

Four figures appear silhouetted against the sunlight on top of the rock. Much and Allan stare up at them.

Holding his knobbler: This is our forest!

Hanton and Forrest each aim an arrow at them as Little John glowers down at them. Robin stares up at them, astonished.

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.END OF EPISODE ONE.