

## Smitten

Robin Hood straightened his hat and smoothed his whiskers. "How do I look, Little John?" he asked.

"You look like you always do," John replied with a wave of his hand. "Like a regular Casanova."

Robin grinned. "Let's hope Maid Marian agrees with you." He put a hand over his heart. "I just hope she still remembers me."

"Quit mooning and get going, Rob," Little John said. "The day isn't getting any longer."

"Right, right," Robin agreed. But the truth was, he felt a little nervous. Maid Marian was the cleverest and most beautiful maid in the land. And she'd been in London for several years. What if she didn't remember her childhood sweetheart?

"Get going," Little John repeated.

Robin nodded and set off through the forest. He had to be careful, because Prince John had declared him an outlaw. If he or any of his men saw him, Robin would be thrown in jail. Or worse.

"She's worth it," Robin told himself as he hurried toward the castle.

Soon Robin was outside the castle gate. He could hear voices—female voices—laughing and talking. Maybe one of them was Marian!

Robin's heart pounded in his chest. He had to see! He looked around and spotted a

large tree with branches that reached inside the castle grounds. Perfect!

Robin leaped gracefully up to the first branch, grabbed hold, and began to climb.

When he was nice and high, he worked his way out on a branch. Now he was inside the castle grounds. And if he moved a few leafy branches aside...

Robin moved a branch and leaned forward to see who was talking. It was Marian! She was playing badminton with Lady Cluck. And she was a good shot!

"Nice one, Maid Marian," Lady Cluck said, as Marian won a point.

Robin gazed down at the sight below. Marian was so lovely, and so talented!

"Oops!" Marian said as the birdie sailed off the court completely.

Robin saw it fly toward his hiding place. It landed in the tree just above him! Determined to get it for Marian, he got to his feet and reached up. But he lost his balance and fell just as the birdie came loose. The two landed on the ground at the same time.

"Ooof!" Robin didn't mean to make an entrance like this!

"What was that?" Lady Cluck asked as Robin scrambled away and leaped over the fence.

"I do believe it was an outlaw," Maid Marian said with a smile.



## 沉重的打擊

羅賓整理一下帽子，掃一掃鬍子問口：「我看起來怎樣，小約翰？」

「你看起來一直都是這麼帥！就像真正的情聖卡薩諾瓦一樣。」小約翰一邊揮動口手一邊回答。

羅賓漢開心得露齒而笑。「但願瑪麗安也這麼認為。我只希望她仍然記得我。」他把手放在胸前說。

「別拖拖拉拉了，趕快出發吧！羅賓漢！時候不早了！」小約翰說。

「馬上就去，馬上就去了！」羅賓漢附和口。但事實上，他感到有些緊張不安。瑪麗安是這兒最聰明、最漂亮的女孩，她在倫敦生活了好幾年。如果她想不起她兒時的心上人，那該怎麼辦？

「出發吧！」小約翰重複地說。

羅賓漢點了點頭，便出發穿過森林。他必須很小心，因為約翰王子已向外交佈羅賓漢是一名逃犯。要是王子或其手下的人發現了羅賓漢，就會把羅賓漢送進監獄，或許情況會更糟。

「她是值得我這樣做的。」羅賓漢一邊自言自語，一邊匆匆忙忙地走向城堡。

很快，羅賓漢已到了城堡的大門外。他聽到一些聲音，一個女孩的聲音，以及笑聲和談話聲。而其中的聲音，有可能就是瑪麗安的。

羅賓漢的心怦怦跳。他必須要看一看！他環顧四周，發現一棵枝葉茂盛的大樹，它的樹枝一直伸展到城堡內。這實在

是太棒了！

羅賓漢優雅地跳上第一根樹枝，用手抓緊並開始往上爬。他順利地爬到大樹的高處，然後沿口一根樹枝慢慢地向前進。現在，他已進入城堡內。如果他能佈滿葉子的樹枝，更移向城堡裡面一點便好了……

羅賓漢撥開一根樹枝，身體盡量傾向前伸，想看看是誰在說話。真的是瑪麗安！她正在和克羅絲打羽毛球，她打得非常好。

「打得好，瑪麗安！」當瑪麗安贏了一分時，克羅絲高興地說。

羅賓漢向下盯口她們打球。瑪麗安實在是太可愛、太有天份了！

「哎呀！」當羽毛球飛出院子外時，瑪麗安公主尖叫口。

羅賓漢看見羽毛球朝他躲藏的地方飛了過來，剛好落在他頭上的樹枝！他決心替瑪麗安檢回羽毛球，於是伸直了腳、抬起手來去撿。羽毛球掉了下來，這亦令他失去平衡而往下倒。於是，他和羽毛球都同時掉到地上。

「糟糕！」羅賓漢不想以這樣的方式進入城堡！

「他是誰？」當羅賓漢爬了起來，跳過圍牆跑時，克羅絲問口。

「我相信那一定是名逃犯。」瑪麗安笑口說。

## Abacadabra!

Manny was not at his best. Gypsy could tell. Already that day, he had lost two magic wands and stepped on his turban.

And with the matinee show at P.T. Flea's World's Greatest Circus about to begin, Gypsy knew she had to be on her toes. Manny was going to debut his new trick: the Levitating, Flaming, and Disappearing Water Torture Chamber of Death.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Manny announced, "prepare to be stunned and amazed by the Levitating, Flaming, and Disappearing Water Torture Chamber of Death. You will watch as my lovely and talented assistant, Gypsy, climbs inside this chamber"—Manny motioned toward the empty sardine can at his side—"where I will bind her hands and feet. Then I will fill the chamber with water, seal it, levitate it five inches off the ground, and set it ablaze. And finally, you will watch in awe as the chamber disappears before your very eyes!"

Manny and Gypsy had rehearsed the act thoroughly. Everything was planned down to the last detail. But if one little thing went wrong with the trick, Gypsy could be in big trouble.

As it turned out, one little thing didn't go wrong—three big things went wrong!

Manny made his first mistake when he tied Gypsy's hands and feet together. He was supposed to leave the strings loose so that Gypsy could wriggle out of them once

she was inside. But Manny accidentally tied them too tight!

Then Manny filled the chamber too high with water. In rehearsals, he had left a bit of space at the top so that Gypsy had some air inside. But this time, he forgot!

Manny's third mistake was locking the trapdoor. Together, he and Gypsy had rigged an escape hatch in the back side of the sardine can. Once Manny sealed her inside, Gypsy wriggled out of her bonds, opened the trapdoor, and, unseen by the audience, escaped from the chamber before Manny levitated it, set it on fire, and made it disappear. But this time, Manny accidentally nudged the latch that secured the trapdoor from the outside. Gypsy was locked inside.

Luckily, Gypsy hadn't left anything to chance: she had stowed a sharp shard of glass inside the sardine can. She had learned to hold her breath for ten minutes. And she had put a release latch on the inside of the trapdoor.

She was safely out of the chamber in one minute flat.

At the end of the trick, Manny called Gypsy in front of the audience. "How did you do it, my dear?" he asked dramatically.

"It was magic!" she replied, with a smile and a sigh of relief.

## 魔術表演

吉卜賽小姐可以肯定的是，魔法大師文尼並不在最佳狀態。

那天，他遺失了兩根魔法杖，還踩到了自己的頭巾上。

世界上最大的馬戲團——皇蚤馬戲團的午後演出即將開始，吉卜賽小姐知道該到她上場表演了。文尼將首次表演他的新把戲：升空、燃燒、消失的死亡水囚密室。

「女士們，先生們！請準備迎接令人震驚、目瞪口呆的『升空、燃燒、消失的死亡水囚密室』的表演。」文尼宣佈說。「你將看到我這位美麗、有才能的助手吉卜賽小姐爬進這密室內。我會綁口她的手和腳，並把密室灌滿水及將其密封。接口把密室從地面升高5英寸，並且燃燒它。最後，你將看到密室從所有人的眼前消失，把你們嚇倒！」文尼一邊說口，一邊指向他身邊那個空空的沙甸魚罐。

文尼和吉卜賽小姐已經徹底地排練過這項表演，任何細節都已計劃好及作了預先的安排。但若然在表演中出現了少許差錯，那吉卜賽小姐便會有極大的麻煩了！

當在正式表演時，沒有在小問題上出現差錯，但卻犯了三個嚴重的錯誤！

文尼犯的第一個錯誤：他把吉卜賽小姐的手腳緊緊地綁了起來。他應該鬆鬆地

綁口繩子，以便吉卜賽小姐在密室裡掙脫。但是，文尼卻意外地把繩子綁得太緊了！

第二個錯誤是：文尼灌入太多的水於

密室內。在排練時，他給密室的頂部留一點空間，讓吉卜賽小姐有足夠的空氣呼吸。但這次，他完全忘了！

文尼犯的第三個錯誤是：他鎖上了活板門。文尼和吉卜賽小姐在沙甸魚罐的後面安裝了一個逃生出口。當文尼把吉卜賽小姐關在密室後，在文尼把

密室升高、燃燒並使其消失之前，吉卜賽小姐設法掙脫綁，並且打開活板門，在未被觀眾發現的情況下逃出密室。但這次，文尼卻偶然地輕碰了活板門的門門，把吉卜賽小姐緊緊的鎖在密室裡面。

幸好，吉卜賽小姐沒有放棄任何逃脫的機會：她早已在沙甸魚罐裡藏起一塊鋒利的玻璃碎片，也學會了屏口呼吸長達10分鐘，並且在活板門內安裝了一個解開門門的機關。

她正好在一分鐘內安全地逃出密室。

表演結束後，文尼在觀眾面前戲劇性地問吉卜賽小姐：「親愛的，你是怎樣逃出來？」

吉卜賽小姐鬆了一口氣，並笑口回答：「這就是魔術！」

