

Readers Theater

excerpt from

Shadows of Sherwood

by **Kekla Magoon**

Characters

Robyn Loxley aka Robyn Hoodlum

Laurel Dayle, Robyn's new friend and expert thief

MP, a member of the Nott City Military Police

Shopkeeper, a woman selling fruit in the Sherwood market

Setting the Stage

Robyn and Laurel have just escaped from jail. They need disguises, and fast! They're also pretty hungry.

The Scene

Laurel: It's market day. The market is the best place to shop. And there's always a good crowd around closing time.

Robyn: We don't have any money.

Laurel: (sighs) I know. "Shop" just sounds nicer. We need to get some new clothes. If we don't look different in a hurry, they're going to catch us.

Robyn: You mean...steal?

Laurel: I don't like that word.

Robyn: But that's what you mean? You're just going to steal new clothes and some shoes--

Laurel: I don't need shoes. I only take things I really need.

Robyn: And that makes it okay?

Narrator One: Meanwhile, Robyn is thinking *Who doesn't need shoes?*

Laurel: You don't have to come. You can take your fancy Tag and go to the real stores. I bet they have nice stores where you come from.

Narrator Two: *They do*, Robyn thought. But using her Tag was still too dangerous.

Robyn: All right. You'll have to show me how.

Narrator One: It was surprisingly easy. They found a row of clothing stalls and made their way down the line, picking up items they needed.

Narrator Two: When the vendors looked the other way, the girls blended into the crowd.

Narrator One: Robyn ended up with a black t-shirt and a pair of gray stretchy exercise pants with a green elastic waistband. They even had one small pocket at the hip to hold her map.

Narrator Two: Laurel opted for calf-length jeans and a blue tank top.

Narrator One: Robyn felt bad about the thefts. It was just a few small items, and she really needed them, but Robyn knew it wasn't right.

Narrator Two: She vowed that when she and her parents were reunited, she'd come back and pay the vendors double for what she had taken.

Narrator One: *What if her parents were gone forever?* Whispered the nagging voice in her mind.

Narrator Two: But Robyn wouldn't allow herself to answer.

Laurel: Now that we look okay, we can go for some food.

Narrator Two: Robyn's stomach growled.

Robyn: All right. But we'll have to be careful.

Laurel: Getting food is harder than clothes. Most of the food vendors know to look out.

Robyn: Just show me what to do.

Laurel: Oh, no. Let me do it. I have a lot of experience. You'll probably get us caught.

Robyn: I'll distract them while you...shop.

Narrator One: Laurel grinned and clapped her hands.

Laurel: Maybe it won't be so hard with two of us.

Narrator Two: They walked along a row of real shops, amid a gathering crowd of people who all seemed to be headed toward the market.

Narrator One: In front of a small produce stand stood a spindly woman in an apron. She was arguing with a thick-chested MP who held a digital clipboard in hand.

MP: The edge of these crates is too close to the edge of the sidewalk. It's a violation.

Shopkeeper: I've never had a problem. There's plenty of room.

MP: You have a problem today. These will be confiscated.

Narrator Two: The woman's dark face slackened.

Shopkeeper: But that's half of my produce for the week! I—I can move them closer...

MP: Too late.

Narrator One: The MP lifted the front row of boxes and placed them on a rolling dolly by the curb. He turned away to grab the next crate.

Narrator Two: Robyn didn't plan it. It just happened. Her arm snaked out, as if of its own accord.

Narrator One: When it returned to her side, a bag of small oranges came along with it, lifted right off the top crate on the dolly.

Laurel: Whoa. What did you do?

Robyn: I—I don't know.

Narrator Two: She hunched her shoulders around the sack and clutched it to her chest.

Narrator One: The girls hurried down the sidewalk.

Laurel: The MP was right there! That is how you get caught.

Robyn: He wasn't looking.

Narrator Two: There was really no defense for what she had done, but she'd done it.

Laurel: Well, gimme some. We have to get rid of the evidence. Now.

Narrator One: Laurel held out her hand. Robyn tore at the mesh and poured three baby oranges into Laurel's cupped palm.

Narrator Two: The bag contained over a dozen, more than the two of them could eat quickly.

Robyn: Here you go.

Narrator One: Robyn tossed two oranges each to a pair of barefooted boys scampering through the crowds. They rewarded her with matching grins.

Robyn: Oranges for everyone!

Narrator Two: She placed a few on the lap of a blind woman sitting on a blanket at the street corner.

Narrator One: It didn't feel so bad, stealing food that had already been taken by an MP. It felt even better to share it with other hungry people.

Narrator Two: Laurel watched with dismay as the fresh haul dwindled to nothing. She mumbled, around a mouthful of citrus sections:

Laurel: Leave the rest to me, would you? You are not a proper thief.

Narrator One: Robyn smiled.