

Babes in the wood 2026 – Audtion piece

Sheriff **(Shouting at the villagers)** Right, you lot, no more singing! It's now officially a taxable offence. So unless you fancy paying by the note, clear off! **(To audience)** And you can shut up. I'll also be introducing a 'booing tax'. Look at you. If ugly were a crime, this whole row would be doing life!

(Villagers are stunned)

Villager 1 Taxable? But we were only warming up for the festival!

Sheriff Festival? FESTIVAL? Not without a Singing Levy, a Dancing Duty, and a Jigging Surcharge!
(Pointing accusingly) And YOU lot look like you can't afford a hum between you!

Villager 2 But Sheriff, we've always sung in the square!

Sheriff Not anymore! Every tap of a toe is a tax! Every wiggle is a fee!

Villager 3 **(Whispering loudly)** If he taxed grumpiness, he'd be a millionaire.

Sheriff I HEARD THAT!

Villager 1 We are fed up with paying your stupid taxes

Sheriff STUPID Taxes ! **(The villagers all look horrified)** Now there is an idea... A stupid tax **(To audience)** With this lot out here, I'll be a millionaire overnight... **(To Villagers)** Now clear off! Go on! No singing, no dancing, no fun of ANY kind unless it's been approved, stamped, and taxed by ME!

(Villagers, tiptoe off exaggeratedly, humming under their breath)

I heard that humming! HUMMING IS A PREMIUM TAX!

(Villagers squeal and scatter offstage in a chaotic bundle)

Now, to get on with my archery practice **(Preening, puffed up, to audience)** Stand back, peasants! You are about to witness the finest marksman in all the land **(Aside, smug)** That's me, by the way **(He poses dramatically, milking it)** Behold! A perfect shot... executed by a perfect man! **(He releases {The Sheriff fires an empty bow} {The arrow whizzes off in entirely the wrong direction. SFX - Comically exaggerated whooshing, ricocheting, maybe a "ping!" or two - Still posing, eyes closed})** Bullseye... Obviously.

Pudding **(Offstage)** OWWW! Me bum!

Sheriff That wasn't the target

(Enter – Pudding hobbling dramatically, followed by Pickle)

Pudding **(As he enters)** You've skewered me posterior! I'll be sitting sideways for a week!

Sheriff Stop whining! It barely grazed you

(Pickle pulls the arrow from Puddings bum – SFX – outrageously loud POP, Pickle goes to give it to the sheriff)

Don't give that to me; I know where it's been!

(Pickle throws the arrow off stage)

So where is my duck dinner?

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Pickle Argh, now... we've had a bit of a... situation

Sheriff What now?

Pickle It came after us; wings flapping, eyes glaring, and it quacked at us.

Pudding **(Shudders)** Not a normal quack. A threatening quack.

Sherriff **(Head in hands)** I can't believe this. Outsmarted by poultry again. Sometimes you are so stupid, it's actually painful

Pickle Well, it doesn't hurt us

Sheriff It will I can assure you! You two are as useless as a rubber beak on a woodpecker

Audition