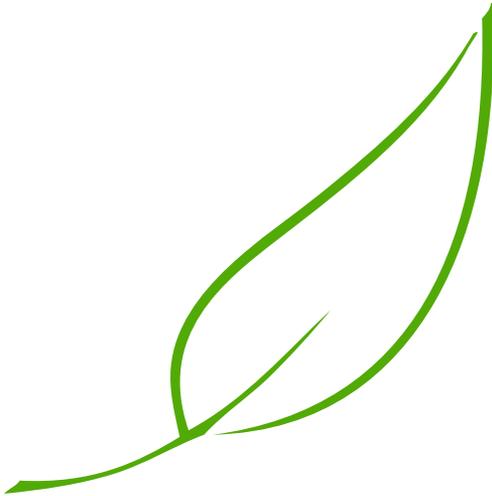


WHAT HO!

by Ken Bradbury



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2m, 2f)

Robin Hood, Nurse, Little John, Morgan (an orderly)

(The scene is the Sherwood Sunset Retirement Home. Robin sits alone, sleeping.)

NURSE: *(entering)* Mr. Hood? *(nothing ... he continues to doze)* Mr. Hood, you need to wake up now.

ROBIN: *(startled)* What? My bow! Where's my bow?

NURSE: I don't have your bow, Mr. Hood. It's time for your prune juice.

ROBIN: You replaced my bow with prune juice?

NURSE: Dr. Nottingham took your bow away, Mr. Hood. You kept shooting the cats here at Sherwood Rest Home.

ROBIN: I mistook them for evil forest elves. They looked like elves. Is it bedtime? I'm going to sleep.

NURSE: You've been sleeping all day, Mr. Hood. You have a visitor.

ROBIN: Do they look like elves?

NURSE: Drink your prune juice, Mr. Hood.

ROBIN: You drink it. *(trying to stand)* I've got to find my bow!

NURSE: *(putting him back down gently)* Your bow is locked up. Just calm yourself, Pops. Your visitor is right outside.

ROBIN: Do they ride gypsy moths and smell of fairy dew?

NURSE: Fairy dew?

ROBIN: Ah! Wallenda the Wizard in disguise!

LITTLE JOHN: *(charging in)* What ho! Yon friend Robin! Whither yonder doest break the golden sunrise, good fellow? The forest calls us, noble comrade! Up! Up! Up and to arms for the sake of Truth and Justice!

ROBIN: (*both he and the nurse do a very long “take” as Little John strikes a ridiculously noble pose ... finally Robin speaks*) Oh ye vile and treacherous knave! Oh that I might smite thee with yon bedpan!

LITTLE JOHN: Robin! Knowest thee me not? ‘Tis thy ancient friend Little John!

ROBIN: Oh, cursed be the day we met, thou wretched and most hideous villain!

LITTLE JOHN: Then we shall do battle!

ROBIN: (*standing shakily*) To the death!

LITTLE JOHN: To the death!

NURSE: (*terrified*) I’m going to get help! (*she exits as Little John roars after her*)

(*Little John and Robin eye each other warily, circle a bit, prepare to fight, then break into fits of laughter.*)

ROBIN: (*finally*) You know, you still can’t act. I’ve told you a hundred times, John, easy with the “What Ho” speech. It makes people nervous.

LITTLE JOHN: I thought I was getting better.

ROBIN: Worse. We’re too old to scare people unless we threaten to cut them out of our wills.

LITTLE JOHN: You’re looking well!

ROBIN: It’s an illusion. I’m dying.

LITTLE JOHN: Dying.

ROBIN: Of boredom. Some advice, friend ... leprosy is better. The Black Plague. Hives and Shingles. But boredom. Ah! That’s the cruelest killer of them all!

LITTLE JOHN: Sit down, Robin. Your knees are wobbling.

ROBIN: It’s all that prune juice. (*he sits*) So ... any call out there for aging men in green tights?

LITTLE JOHN: Canned corn commercials and Christmas parades.

ROBIN: It’s a shame, isn’t it?

LITTLE JOHN: What’s that, old friend?

ROBIN: Two the world’s most fierce defenders of freedom and justice ... and now our toughest battle is getting the cap off the Excedrin bottle.

LITTLE JOHN: Someone's coming.

ROBIN: It's the Witch of Sherwood Forest. Quick. The bird routine.

NURSE: (*enters in a panic with Morgan, an aide*) Here they are!

ROBIN: (*as both he and Little John become extremely calm, lovable and a even a bit normal*) I say John, is that a yellow-knuckled sap-winder?

LITTLE JOHN: No, dear Robin, but the chrysanthemums simply take my breath away. Is that a titwillow on the trellis?

ROBIN: Quite.

LITTLE JOHN: Quite.

ROBIN: (*pretending to just now notice the Nurse*) Why, we have company! Care for some tea, dearie? We were just discussing our birds. Do you know anything about purple pompadours?

MORGAN: (*to the Nurse*) So they're fruity. No law against that.

NURSE: But they were just ...

LITTLE JOHN: Oh, poor dear. It's the heat, isn't it?

MORGAN: You called me here for this? (*Morgan leaves*)

NURSE: (*calling after Morgan*) But they were about to ... (*sees Robin and Little John smiling blissfully at her*) ... about to ...

ROBIN: Tie her hands!

LITTLE JOHN: To the stake! Tie her to the stake! Dwarves! Prepare the bonfire!

ROBIN: The bonfire! The bonfire! The witch shall die tonight! (*The Nurse screams and runs from the room*) Now that ... that was much better.

LITTLE JOHN: Tie her hands? I haven't heard that routine in years.

ROBIN: It was always one of my best. ... John, you've got to get me out of here.

LITTLE JOHN: You don't like the food?

ROBIN: Robin Hood was not meant to be cooped up in a home watching Better Health Through Finger-stretching on



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