

From Robin Hood, by Gay H. Hammond

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Style: Comic Adventure (usually quarter-staff)

scene ii:

[ROBIN and LITTLE JOHN have just met at a log crossing a stream. Little John will not let ROBIN pass without paying a toll. ROBIN disagrees]

ROBIN HOOD: 'Tis thievery!

LITTLE JOHN: Harsh times make for harsh measures.

ROBIN HOOD: Harsh?
[slyly]

Now how can that be, when good Prince John sits upon the throne!

LITTLE JOHN: *[angrily]* Good Prince John? *Good* Prince John? Aye, he whose taxes take the grain from every field, and make good-wives weep to see children go hungry.

ROBIN HOOD: You are not a loyal vassal to Prince John?

LITTLE JOHN: I am loyal to the true king! If good King *Richard* would but return from foreign lands, and kick his brother out of doors, then I shouldn't be driven to act the thief!

ROBIN HOOD: See here, fellow, I do love a thief and I see we are of like mind, too, when it comes to the value of Kings over Princes --

LITTLE JOHN: Prince John, faugh! *[and on the "faugh" THEY spit]*

ROBIN HOOD: Agreed, and I like you the better for it still, I think that you should stand back, friend, and let a better man pass.

LITTLE JOHN: Better man? By what measure, bantam? I can tan your hide all the colors of a tinker's cloak, if you should step upon that bridge.

ROBIN HOOD: Yet I can measure your chest with my arrow very speedily.

LITTLE JOHN: Are you a coward, to threaten me with arrows when I have nothing but this good oaken staff to defend me?

ROBIN HOOD: The second time today I've heard that word! Let me but get a quarter-staff, and then we'll see who is the better man.

LITTLE JOHN: *[leaning on his own staff, and gesturing grandiloquently]*
Take all the time you wish! It will only take a moment to knock you off this bridge.

ROBIN HOOD: *[as HE searches for a suitable staff]*
Agreed, you are a mountain –

LITTLE JOHN: Aye!

ROBIN HOOD: Yet it is not weight, but skill, that will carry me over that stream -- and who is more skilled than I?

LITTLE JOHN: He stands before you!
[when ROBIN has found a staff; bowing]
At your service, bantling.

[ROBIN approaches opposite side of log with a staff; THEY face off; LITTLE JOHN whacks ROBIN's staff, and ROBIN shakes his hand a little, as though the vibration was prodigious]

ROBIN HOOD: Goodly force, indeed --

LITTLE JOHN: I am no feather --

ROBIN HOOD: But what of finesse?

[and ROBIN does something speedy and clever with his staff].

LITTLE JOHN: I would rather fight than dance! *[THEY set to]*

ROBIN HOOD: *[as THEY fight]*
How happy I am that I will be able to give you a bath today! You stand in need of it, friend.

LITTLE JOHN: You've a liking for the water, have you? Good thing!
[after a flurry of whacks, THEY break for a moment]
Now, sir, are you ready to admit you've met the better man, and pay your toll?

ROBIN HOOD: I admit you have some skill B

LITTLE JOHN: Some?!

ROBIN HOOD: But I -- *[whack!]* Will -- *[whack!]* Not pay!
[whack, whack, whack!]

LITTLE JOHN: ‘S truth! I begin to like you.

ROBIN HOOD: How lovely for me. Now I am sorry, giant, but I want my supper . . . so here’s an end!

[BIG drive to the end, which is of course that LITTLE JOHN flips ROBIN off]

LITTLE JOHN: *[laughing hugely]* Aye, now I *see* your end!

ROBIN HOOD: *[sitting up; conceding]* Fairly fought. You are . . . a good man.

LITTLE JOHN: A *better* man.

ROBIN HOOD: A strong man.

LITTLE JOHN: A *better* man.

ROBIN HOOD: A decent –
[JOHN roars and makes to start the fight again; ROBIN flings up a conceding hand]
Oh very well! By this and by that, I’ll swear that you, my mountain, are a better man . . . with a cudgel.

End Scene