

JUVAMENT!

A MYTHICAL MESS

THE 1ST VOLUME

OF THE

MEDIEVAL MUDDLES

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

J. AARON GRUBEN

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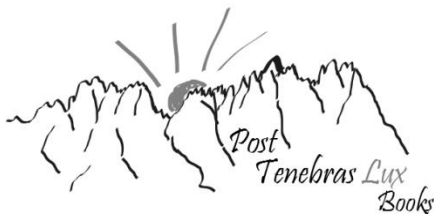
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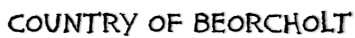
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INTRODUCTION

“But I am not sure that even sensible people are always right; and this has been my principal reason for deciding to be silly—a decision that is now irrevocable.”

- G. K. Chesterton

History may never recover. A manuscript which had lain for centuries in the coal cellar at the Abby for the Monks of Perpetual Obscurity was brought to my attention. It bore 4000 some-odd pages (many very odd indeed) written by one Balgor the Wordy. In the slim hope some of it could be eventually interesting or edifying, I decided not to chuck the entire thing into the coal furnace—though I have little doubt there will be readers who wish I had. These fortunately forgotten histories, estimated by *very* smart scholars to have been composed in the 13th century, detail the customs and histories of a country previously unknown to historians called Beorcholt. After reading them, my fascination was piqued and I studied all I could about this wonderful land. The tale you hold in your hand is the result. I hope some of you find it interesting. (*Coxby and Twine’s Publishing, Ltd* recently offered a veritable fortune for it, but I turned them down and instead self-published like all the smart authors do.)

Beorcholt was an ancient kingdom we† believe once occupied an isolated strip of land which has since slid into the English Channel, leaving only massive white cliffs sheared away with the cataclysm.‡ This was the result of an unfortunate concatenation of accidents involving unusual snails and a traveling salesman... But that is a tale for another time. Before it disappeared, Beorcholt was effectively hidden from the rest of the 13th century world—to all but the most intrepid travelers—by an insurmountable range of troll-haunted mountains at its northern border, miles of impassable marshlands on its southern border, hundreds of acres of thick birch forest on its west border, and high seaside cliffs on its eastern border.

The only extant copy of a brochure from the Beorcholt Department of Tourism calls Beorcholt “the Land of Mything Links,” and I do not subscribe to Tom’s theory that it was written by a man with a lisp. Thith... I mean, this is because beings considered mythical in other parts of the world settled in the conveniently isolated Beorcholt long after they became mere wives’ tales in other lands. This gave said mythical beings a base of operations from which to sneak into other countries occasionally, frighten small children, and insinuate themselves into timeless fairy tales. It also gave me the opportunity to write about trolls and goblins and dryads.

Putting away for a moment the fun, literary façade, these are historical fantasy. They are fairy tales *loosely* anchored in history. History is fantastic... Sometimes, almost literally. The dusty pages of God’s dealing with mankind are constructed from tens of thousands of fascinating stories. Many would be unbelievable in a fantasy novel. And so, even while telling a fairy tale, I could not refrain from anchoring it in the real 13th century. It intersects with real history occasionally, though is fully and entirely made up. The trick, of course, is in figuring out which parts are history and which are fairy tale...

Alright then... Enough introduction. On with the story...

-J. Aaron Gruben, DVM.*

†The other Beorcholt historian (Tom...who is a plumber by day) and myself.

‡At a place we call Dover

*Doctor of Vernacular Manipulation (and possibly, but much less interestingly, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine).



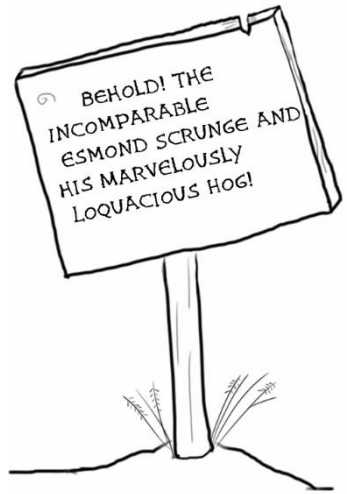
*A CHILD COMETH UNTO A FAIRE
AND MEETETH A FELLOW FULL OF HAIRE*

Once upon a time, which is how stories of this sort usually begin, there was a stub. And since you probably do not hail from the fair land of Beorcholt—which fell into the sea somewhere off the coast of Dover hundreds of years ago—you probably don’t know what a “stub” is. Put simply, “stub” was a somewhat derogatory term used by Beorcholders for a personage of exceptional hirsute and diminutive qualities: that is a short, hairy person. And this, my good reader, is the tale of a stub and his talking pig, and the adventures that befell them: a fact I feel obliged to tell you from the start, in the event you object to stories of hairy or porcine individuals, and would rather put this book down now and read something else.

In the land of Beorcholt, within Sherring-Cross Hundred, a faire¹ was held every summer. Now, if you happened to be one of the poor peasants who visited the faire (in your time off between mowing hay fields and mucking stables), or perhaps one of the lesser noblemen who visited (in between sumptuously feasting and playing quoits), or perhaps even one of the clerks (in between copying Scripture and singing Matins), you were sure to come across

¹ You can tell it was a classy, olde, Renaissance-style faire, with lots of streaming pennants and colored pavilions, because it was spelled with an “e” on the end.

a sign. It was a gigantic sign, big as the gargoyle who once stomped out of the marshes of Rouen. It was so bedecked and belittered with brilliant ribbons of purple and gold and neon pink you could not help but notice it. And you would surely notice the words: “Behold! The Incomparable Esmond Scrunge and his Marvelously Loquacious Hog!”



If you were one of those faire-goers at Sherring-Cross Hundred² with any sense of taste, you would walk right past this sign to see something more refined—like Bernice, the Fire Juggling Maid of Gandros Mountains, or John Piper, the Man Who Plays Nineteen flutes at the Same Time (*Without Drooling*). But if you chanced to be one of the few to stop at Esmond Scrunge’s tent your senses would have been assailed (in addition to the pungent odor of gnomish fennel cakes and fried cauldron rice) by a sight you might never forget—no matter how hard you tried.

A huge and unsightly boar, with a black velvet cloak tossed over his wiry brown hair, and massively gnarled tusks tipped with gold paint, would come dashing out of the far side of the tent and stand on his hind legs with his forehooves planted precariously on an overturned apple bucket. And if you did

² Keeping with the tradition established by William the Conqueror’s pleasantly named “Domesday Book,” Beorcholt was divided into districts called Hundreds. There were five of these: Angsward, Maine-du-Mar, Samsvelde, Sherring-Cross, and Spooqe. Angsward was the Ruling Hundred, the capital of which was Morbeam Fortress. This great palace sat atop the cliff-lined estuary of Gullsbill, and overlooked the major harbor of the kingdom. Most of Beorcholt’s population, particularly its middle working class, lived in Maine-du-Mar (which could have been called the industrial Hundred). Samsvelde was a wild, mountainous place inhabited by sturdy pioneers. Sherring-Cross was the smallest district and consisted mostly of small farms and villages on rolling, emerald hills. Spooqe most people did not talk about. It consisted of a woeful swampland called Dorcian or “Dim-Marsh” and was mostly inhabited by outlaws, marsh-hobs, defaulted debtors, and politicians. Now you know everything.

not run away at the fearsome animal's voluminous assault of snorting, grunting, and short squeals, you would be unfortunate enough to see another figure sprint from the far end of the tent to the rusting ring in the center and leap to stand atop the broad back of the shaggy forest boar. This would be Esmond Scrunge. Esmond was a midget of a man who looked somewhat like a grotesque cross between a Brackish Mountain dwarf and a Market City hobgoblin. He was not quite 5 foot tall, but muscular, though lean as a kumquat tree. A shocking tousle of unkempt, brown-red hair occupied the top of his head like some hairy parasite. A shaggy, red beard jutted off his face—from the very day of his birth, by some accounts—as if his hair had decided to start expanding over his chin after all the space was used up on top of his head. It buried all his mouth but a single bright tooth and all his nose but a tiny red nob. His clothes were of the most vivid hues, generally difficult in the extreme for even the most talented bard to describe.

“A *faaaaaaaair* morning to you, good ladies and gentlefolk!” he would lisp, as he balanced atop the pig and pointed a gnarled digit toward the apex of the tent.

And then, if you were bold enough to stay through all of this, the most grotesque thing of all would happen. Esmond Scrunge's pig (that's right: the pig) would erupt, in a voice that sounded like gravel scrunched beneath the rough boots of a troll, into a recitation of Sir Loin's famous speech to his men at the Battle of Belfry.

“Men, I know your mettle! Though an hundred gargling river giants are at this moment stomping our way, you will not turn and run. O, ye happy few! Ye band of cousins...”

You get the idea. And doubtless, you wonder why Good Duke Orthmantle “The Clever” did not have Esmond Scrunge and his Loquacious Hog fed to the hedge cats, or thrown into the mystical Hole-in-the-Middle-Of-Nowhere. Well... This remains a mystery. However, I will show you henceforth how the

surprising deeds of this man would perpetuate his name throughout all the rolling glades and towering peaks of Beorcholt for generations, despite his horrid sideshow.

But let's not get too far ahead of ourselves.

One especially blustery fall day, when the orange-tinted birch leaves for which Beorcholt is named swirled furiously about the roads and byways, Esmond Scrunge heard a noise. It was a small noise, just outside the little partition in the back of the tent he used as a bedroom. He thought at first it was the sound of a thieving cobalt that had just been caught. Then he thought it was a tiny screech mole emerging from his burrow to emit his fall mating call. Then he decided it was neither of those things, pushed his chair back from the table where he had been adding up the pitiful day's take from faire-goers, and went to see for himself what it was. Esmond Scrunge squinted in the fading light at the last of the crowds trekking around the huddle of fancy, renaissance-style pavilionse (with an "e") toward the road. Then he noticed something else. He was surprised to have to look down to see it—he did not often find things shorter than himself—and he twitched up one bushy eyebrow in surprise. A wicker basket sat unattended at his feet. And inside the basket, he saw a cute birch wood rattle. And under the rattle was a soft downy blanket. And inside that blanket—as I suspect you may have guessed—was a small pink baby.

The baby looked up at Esmond Scrunge and showed off several large front teeth (which were not half buried in a beard as were Esmond's). Esmond Scrunge raised both eyebrows and stared for a whole minute. He had heard about babies but had not often seen one. They were rather a scarce specimen in Beorcholt in those days.

The baby said **"MWehhhh?!"**

Esmond Scrunge held up a warning finger.
"Sit! Stay!"



Esmond bounded around the entire faire but could find no one who belonged to the baby. When he returned to his tent, the basket and the baby were still there. The baby shone its teeth in a slobbery smile. Abruptly the stub picked up the basket and went into his tent. He was not a particularly fatherly or selfless man, was Esmond Scrunge, though perhaps no blackguard. But no man with half a heart, or even a quarter of a gall bladder, could just leave a baby out in that chill fall wind. He placed the basket on the little cot filling the corner of the room and went back to his table. But Esmond found it hard to go back to work and stepped back to the basket to peer curiously inside.

"M...MM...bLeH!" said the baby.

"Quiet now!" Esmond raised a warning hand to his lips. "Garbanzo does not tolerate children."³

The baby was not very good at being quiet, but seemed in excellent humor, and went on babbling inanities in a very loud voice—much louder than a set of lungs so small ought to produce.

"Aah! Da! Da! Daaaaa!!!"

Esmond's eyes grew big, and he hurriedly picked the child up in his hairy hands, trying awkwardly to quiet it. A large, shaggy, porcine head poked around the draped partition which formed Esmond's room. The boar's tusks glittered in the candlelight, and a poet might have said his proportionately minuscule, porcine eyes seemed to shimmer with the primal instincts of his feral forest ancestors. A reasonable person would not have cared about his eyes. The tiny clip-clop of his hooves and the swing of his massive haunch did something to spoil the tusks' fearsome effects. Any residual terrifying aura the hog might have exuded was vaporized the moment his large mouth opened and poured

³ I've recently been made aware that Coxby and Twine (of *Coxby and Twine's Publishers, Ltd.*) are in agreement with Garbanzo. Listed 1st under publishing guidelines on their webpage: "Do not, under any circumstances, submit a manuscript written by a baby." And on their bio page Coxby is quoted as saying, "I do not like babies, and am certain I've never been one."

deep and gravelly words, like a stream overflowing its banks. Like an annoying, bubbling, unstoppable stream.

“I say, Esmond, old chump... Did you hear someth— by Gamelin’s spear! I’d know that pink, rounded nubbin o’ a head any old day. ‘Tis a shaveling, ‘tis!⁴ Why me ol’ Aunt Ermiline once adopted a human child—looked much like that one, it did, though blast me if they don’t all look the same—and raised ‘im in the woods. Then she sent him out into the wide world. The poor fella’ grew confused, I heard. Constantly rooted about the ground for truffles. Wallowed in mud holes in the center of Gamptowne’s square, right in front of the mayor, they say. And after he’d got a wife and a litter of four! Well, ‘a chap with transplanted roots don’t know where to root,’ me ol’ Uncle Corktail once said. Anyhoo... Where’d you find the little creature?”

Esmond barely had time to say “outside in a basket” before the hog’s flood of narrative continued. Yes indeed, Esmond’s friend Horace was a genuine oracular beast. The hog could talk, but Esmond had long ago found the hard thing was to get him to stop talking. “Well, it does seem the right sort o’ weather for dropping baskets full o’ shavelings,” Horace continued, barely pausing for a grandiose snort of air before he rushed on. “Just like me old Uncle Hamburg found me little nephew years ago! Grind me to sausage if it isn’t the day to find a baby in a basket! Does it have a name, or do you...”

Esmond let the current of words trickle into background noise. His arms were aching, but he feared to change the baby’s position. “What are you called, I wonder? I suppose you’re a she...” he squinted down at the little bundle covered in a purple smock and flowered bonnet. “Perhaps Lucretia...” He had always been fond of the name. The Baby blinked for a moment at Esmond Scrunge’s bushy face with a sort of shocked expression. The face she made even rendered Horace speechless.

⁴ An archaic word sometimes used for a young human: one too young to shave.

"A...a... WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

Esmond Scrunge almost dropped the baby in an attempt to find his ears inside his beard and cover them up. It had never occurred to him that such a small, pink creature could make such a loud, blue sound. He quickly set the baby back into the basket, but this did not help. Horace ran out of the room squealing, "It don't like 'Lucretia!' Never call it 'Lucretia!'"

"Ack!" choked Esmond, waving frenetic arms in despondency as the shaveling let out noises like a yodeling Samsvelder with a megaphone in a box canyon. "Help me quiet her, Horace!" He danced up and down and grimaced at the baby, but that only made her cry more. "Gitchie! Gitchie! Gooo!" he chortled as he tickled the baby under the chin. He remembered vaguely his fiancé doing something like that to a baby. This understandably made the little one twice as loud.

"WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!"

Esmond was very worried. Surely the child could be heard, even over the wailing wind: and Garbanzo *really* did not like children.

"Food... Give it food!" The ugly head of the hog poked its way through the partition, squinting and grimacing at the ugly sound. "Food always makes hoglings happy."

Esmond offered The Baby the remnants of a meat pie and some beer, but she waved her arms so hard in her distress it fell to the floor untasted. He grabbed an apple and put it in The Baby's lap, but this still did not pacify her. "What do they like to eat?" he screamed at Horace, trying to be heard over the shrieks filling the night air.

"Goodness gracious!" murmured the hog, his beady eyes twitching this way and that in concentration. "What indeed? What indeed! Bless me! Bless me if I really don't know! Goodness me. How would some o' my slop do for her?" Esmond shrugged and splashed a pile of Horace's slop before The Baby. She kept crying.

It was at that very moment both Esmond and the hog heard the clippity clop of large hooves outside the pavilion, moments before the flap was thrown open and a gust of cold wind swept the small interior. Esmond and his friend turned deadly pale, and even the baby stopped crying at the sudden apparition. There, outlined in the fading autumn light, vast and magnificent, stood a man... No, a horse... No... A horse-man. A centaur!⁵ A centaur stood there. His gilded jacket was curled up in spikes at the shoulders, an old and impossible looking key dangled from a silver chain against his hairy chest, and he wore a bright orange cloak and multicolored top-hat. A deep, deep scowl curled his lips and furrowed his brow as he glared down at them. Garbanzo the Magnificent had heard the baby!

⁵ An intriguing characteristic of Beorcholt history is the frequent reference to mythological creatures like centaurs, trolls, elves, and even talking pigs. This could mean several things... A) Chronicallers like Blagor the Wordy were frauds, fibbers, and lying liar who lie. B) Creatures considered mythical in other parts of the world were alive and real in Beorcholt, given Beorcholt's extremely convenient geographical isolation and later complete destruction in The Great Schism.* C) Some mysterious present day novelist, brilliantly creative and unbelievably handsome, wrote a fantasy story with mythical creatures but could not forgo including occasional reference to historical 13th century, and consequently made the whole country of Beorcholt up out of his astonishingly clever brain. Personally, I favor option C.

*The Great Schism was not a theological debate nor the famous Beorcholt debate regarding green or red chiles. It is the cataclysmic earthquake which opened a mile wide crack in the ground and slid Beorcholt into the ocean. (To clarify, the country of Beorcholt was never heard of again. People heard of the ocean again.)



*A FATEFUL CHOICE HEREIN IS MADETH
THAT JUST MIGHT GET THE AUTHOR PAIDETH*

Garbanzo the Magnificent was a centaur of stately appearance and proud mien. Unfortunately, Garbanzo was less a noble son of Chiron than one of the unruly and selfish sons of Ixion, who were said to fall from the cloud eons before, primed for mischief and general crankiness. The owner and manager of the Sherring-Cross Hundred Faire (spelled with an “e” in classy Renaissance manner), he often claimed it was the pressure of being a small business owner in an unfair world that made him cross. But as reality often tends to be, the truth was simpler: he was just a nasty, selfish person. It was he who scoured the kingdom of Beorcholt and far lands beyond to bring the good peasantry of Sherring-Cross such quality family entertainment as Flamgar the Fluting Goblin, Hermie the Upside-Down Man, Dougal the Arithmetical She-Wolf, and, of course, Esmond and his Loquacious Hog. He had every conceivable type of being displayed in vivid, and sometimes rather odd, showmanship.⁶ Every type of being that is, except a baby. Garbanzo despised babies.⁷ Their cute pinkness annoyed

⁶ *Coxby and Twine’s Publishing, Ltd.* notes, “No manuscript shall be considered that references fantasy creatures such as goblins, centaurs, or well-rested mothers of preschoolers.” Twine is quoted, “I once had a goblin for a pet when I was 10, and I positively refuse to print a word about the beastly things.” This leads me to wonder why they want my manuscript.

⁷ Well... That, and he had a wise business owner’s sense there could be legal/ethical repercussions to displaying a baby as a faire side show.

him, their complete dependence irritated him, their obnoxious cries drove him to distraction, and they were constantly getting in the way of business.

"EEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAHHHH!!!!" shrieked The Baby—speaking of obnoxious cries.

Garbanzo the Magnificent frowned deeply some more, leaned over the basket to scowl at the baby in the hopes of frightening her into silence, and then gestured Esmond before clop-clipping⁸ away from the tent. Esmond left The Baby in the care of poor Horace, who vainly offered her some of his choicest truffles.

"*What* is that?" Garbanzo sternly inquired, giving off a regally injurious look and jabbing a thumb in the direction of the screaming tent.

"It's a shaveling I found sitting in a basket behind my tent, Garbanzo," Esmond replied, attempting his most disarming smile,⁹ while the sounds of screams and squeals issued from the tent. Esmond colored as he noted people poking their heads out of the surrounding pavilions to glare in irritation at the noise and argument. "She started crying, and we have been trying to make her stop."

"Well, put her right back where you found her," Garbanzo replied gruffly. "I'm sure her mother will find her soon enough."

"But I looked all round the faire, and her mother is not here."

"Then her mother will come in the morning. Put her back, and there's an end to it."

Esmond pulled his cloak tight against the chill, blustery night. Sitting a baby out in a basket on a night like this was not a good plan. "I don't think that would be good for her, Garbanzo. I will keep her in my tent tonight and try to find her home tomorrow."

⁸ He was walking backwards now.

⁹ Garbanzo's arms both remained attached despite the grin.

The regal centaur scowled for a moment in silence. “Look here,” his tone became suddenly shrewd and very matter-of-fact. “We are both men of the world, Esmond, and might as well not beat about the gorse-bush. We know her mother is not going to be found. Parents have been abandoning their babies since the KingdomHealthAct! became law. Nobody in their right mind is going to claim her. Take her at once to the Royal Orphan Care Office.”¹⁰

Esmond hesitated, thinking hard. He had once seen a ragtag group of abandoned children taken in by the Royal Orphan Care Office, and the memory of their haggard faces and terrible condition still haunted him. In fact, he had seen a few officers of ROCO and did not like the thought of sending The Baby to them. “I...I think... O Magnificent Garbanzo, I’d best keep her until her parents are found.”

“You do that, you runty stub, and you are out in the gutter where I first found you and your hog in a drunk stupor¹¹,” came the stern reply. “I forbid you to keep that baby in my faire a moment longer!”

“WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!”

The Baby’s wails were pitiful and grated horribly on Esmond’s ears. Suddenly, despite the nasty sounds, he felt this shaveling needed a friend. Stubborn determination bred into a long and ancient line of Scrunges—that Esmond

¹⁰ The ruler of Beorcholt was Beregoth I and under his reign a series of healthcare reform bills called KingdomHealthAct! was enacted. The general effect was to centralize healthcare and consolidate the private medical insurance companies into two government sanctioned ones. These were the Gorps Organized Reliability Fund and the Bristlebrow Associated Medical Group. Both were run by troll families from the wild-country north of Beorcholt who had insinuated themselves with surprising rapidity. Every Beorcholter had to purchase medical insurance from BAMG or GORF. And monthly premiums drastically increased with the addition of family members. Consequently, the size of families dropped rapidly. In a climate where children were largely viewed as disruptions to “the good life” already, the Act plummeted the birthrate and caused child abandonment. This sad statistic necessitated the Royal Orphan Care Office (ROCO). There is debate about why the KingdomHealthAct! was never written without an exclamation point, but the prevailing theory among Beorcholt historians (especially Tom) is this was a gimmick to increase it’s appeal.

¹¹ A drunken hog is not a pretty sight.

knew little about—flared up in his breast. Along with a long-held dislike of Garbanzo. His knobby fists doubled and his toothy teeth clenched. “Then I’ll leave,” he growled.

Garbanzo was silent for a very short time before he replied curtly. “Go then! I can easily find someone to replace you. Someone who does not bring inconvenient and annoying shavelings! Begone! Never come back!” He turned and clopped away into the blustery night.

Esmond Scrunge stood looking after him, a dozen or so furious and unprintable adjectives clopping through his hirsute head. Then he turned on his heel and stormed back into the tent. The Baby had stopped crying to quite suddenly fall asleep. Horace regained all his truffles, right as Esmond came in and told him to pack the rest of his things.

“We’re sacked,” he snorted, “on account of this baby. I will not leave her out in the cold. I hate working here anyway, and Garbanzo can see how well his faire fares without us now! ‘Runtly stub’ indeed! Oh, clever! As if I have never heard that one before...”

Horace looked as downcast as a hog can look at these tidings and would have had lots to say if he had not been completely winded by recently pleading with a wailing baby. So he simply trotted into his room to gather his few porcine possessions.

Packing for a trip is a lot simpler when you do not actually own anything. Esmond tended toward a minimalist lifestyle, mostly due to his minimal income. He packed the two suits of clothes he owned—one to wear for a few days while he got around to washing the other. He packed his entire collection of cutlery and cooking equipment—a tin cup and a steel spork. He packed a bag of geedunk¹² and a loaf of bread. A small shimmering silver flask, engraved with a sea-mule and Esmond’s initials, was tossed into his satchel as well. He

¹² A hard granola mixture often eaten in Sherring-Cross, especially on journeys.

owned one treasure, kept locked in a wide, wooden box. It was a beautifully wrought bow, made of aged birch wood and inlaid with silver filigree, with leaves shaped out of thinly hammered copper. It was a gift passed down from his great-great-grandfather. It had been used in the Troll Wars and was named *Gorpswasp*, or Gorps' Wasp. "Whatever a Gorps is!" the teen Esmond had thought laughingly when he heard the tale. This treasure he pulled from its box and slung over his back, sighing as he thought of the brave deeds he would never do with it.

Esmond took up his walking stick, or *shligbleigbeighie* as they called them in Beorcholt. This was of most gorgeous workmanship, carved of solid oak by his own hand and wrought into the shape of a dragon's head at its knobby end. Horace showed his face again, carrying a small sack in his mouth of whatever it is pigs possess, and Esmond tied the basket and baby securely onto the hog's back.

This woke her, and she frowned fiercely before crying again.
"WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!"

And the shaveling's wailing mingled with the wail of the chill night air and the croaking of the toadbirds¹³ as Esmond tucked her closely in her blankets, lifted the tent flap for the last time, and set out with his hog and newfound shaveling to find the night road.

Horace sighed, an odd noise from a pig. Esmond set his teeth and set his feet moving away from the life he had known so long at the Faire. He did not look back.

¹³ This strange avian specimen was found exclusively on the lower moors of Sherring-Cross, and likely resembled today's frogmouth. The toadbird was stocky, with a broad head and bill, dark feathers, and flame red eyes. It nibbled just about anything smaller than itself, probably not with any sort of daintiness. Its characteristic croaking was heard especially loudly in fall nights on the moor.

Thanks for your interest in Juvament!

Read the rest soon!

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