

concerning the Jabberwock

"I myself was on a hunting trip in Africa with a young friend of mine. Showing him how it was done and getting him out from under the dotage of his overbearing father. It was nothing but 'Beware this' and 'Beware that' over the slightest of creatures from that old man. He had obviously never been on an adventure in his entire life. I suspect in fact, that he was a commoner."

Duke Peter pauses a moment in recollection.

"The trip itself to the borogoves of Africa was quick and without incident. We managed to be swallowed quite quickly by a passing whale at the beginning of the journey - which is in my estimation by far the fastest method of sea travel. Steering is a simple case of tonsil manipulation and exiting the creature upon reaching our destination is sheer simplicity itself, as all gentleman carry a modicum of snuff."

He turns to address the doctor.

"Well you might think the Jabberwock to have been extinct in Africa, good doctor. For in our expedition we hunted them down to the last of their breed. For they are an easy species to track, always frequenting Tumtum trees and burbling as they move. We chased many a Jabberwock as they whiffled through the tulgey woods. And several sword strokes would often kill the beasts."

"It was their poor sport that worried me. So after we were down to a breeding pair of Jabberwocks, I thought to myself - there must be a way to breed a hardier animal. Forthwith I set forth and caught a frumious Bandersnatch, whose tenacity and voraciousness were legendary. Thanks to a potion I had about my person given to me by the Empress Catherine the Great (but that is another story), it was a simple matter to entice the animals to procreate."

"The resultant frumious Jabberwock as we so named it possessed a thickened hide that naught but a vorpal blade could shear. Once we introduced the Jubjub bird into our breeding program, we soon had the Jabberwock's arsenal of animal weaponry replete with jaws to bite and claws to catch."

"Unfortunately for us, the animals had become so ferocious by this time that containing them in their cages proved impossible. And one brillig night, when the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe, they escaped - wreaking havoc on our encampment."

"Through fortunate foresight, Lewis had about his person a vorpal blade. With a quick snicker-snack he beheaded one of the beasts, driving the rest back into the tulgey wood. I let him keep the head to show to his father upon our return to England."

"I regret, your unexpected encounter with the Jabberwock in Africa, Marquis - as I had bred them to be challenging game for well prepared hunters. Why else would one travel to Africa after all?"

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