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Opening extract from
**National Trust: The Secret Diary
of John Drawbridge, a Medieval
Knight in Training**

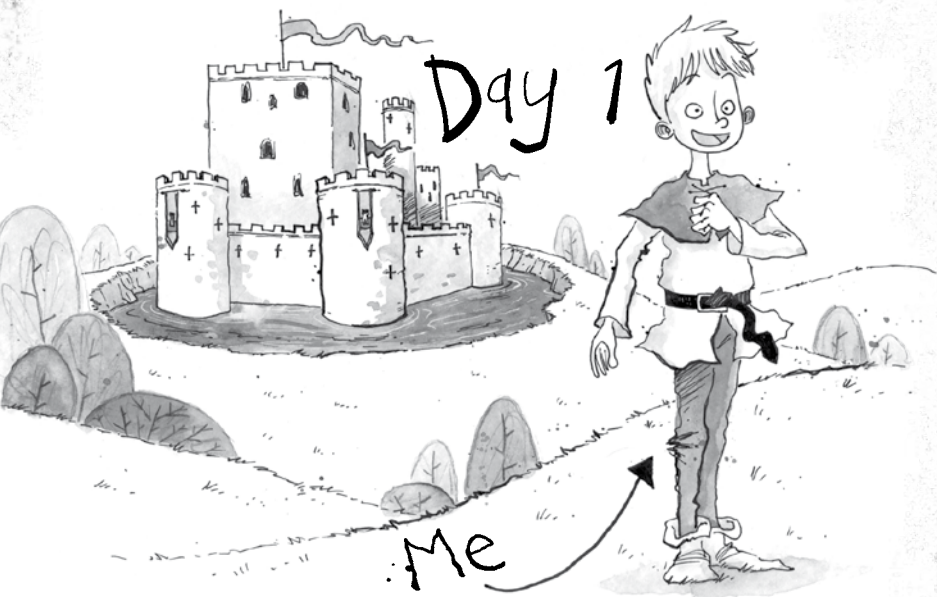
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Please print off and read at your leisure.



My name is John Drawbridge and I now live at Widemoat Castle. I am filled with such happiness that I walk around with the biggest and widest of grins in Christendom¹!

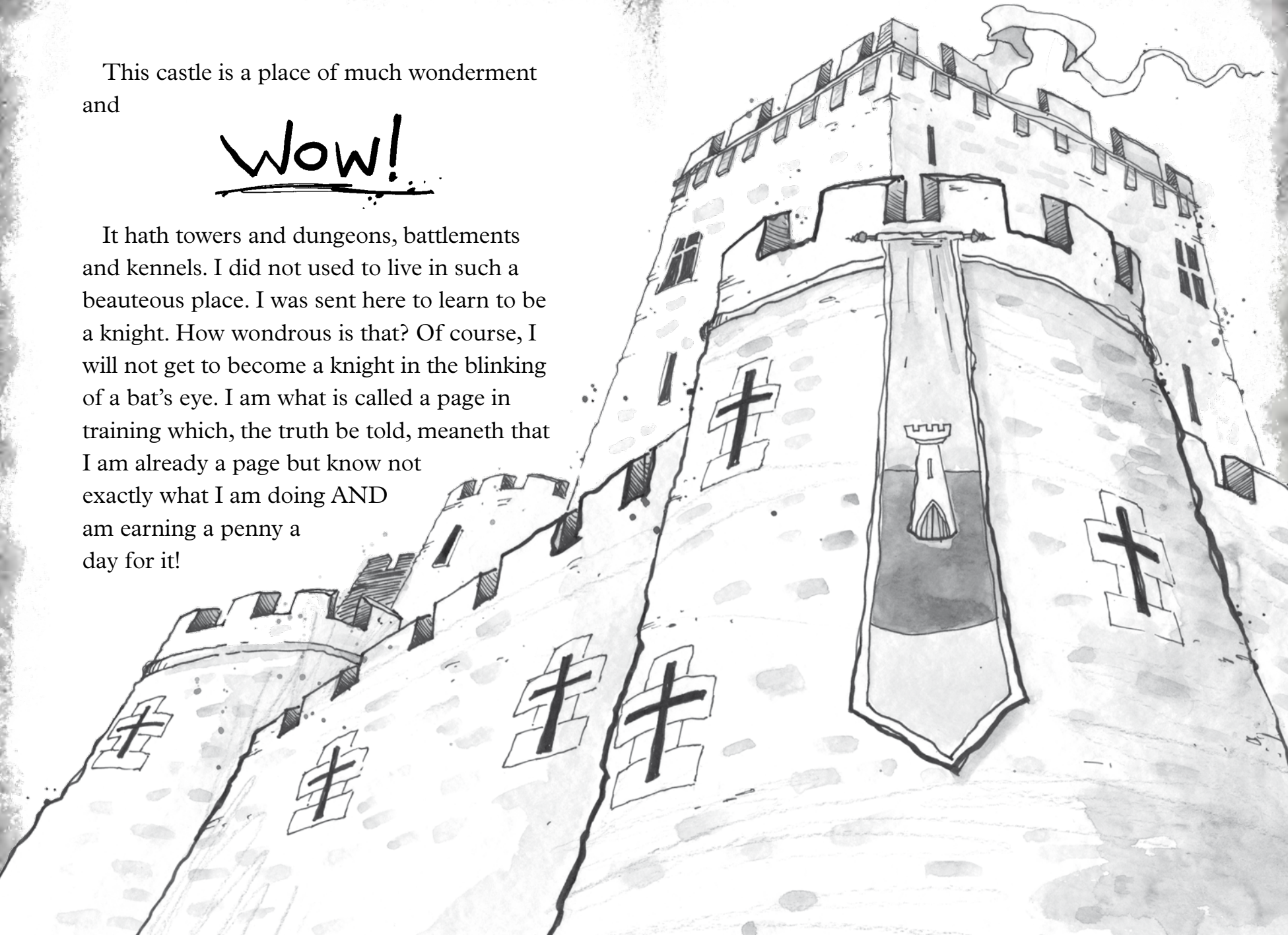
The only person I have seen with a wider grin is the Fool², a man who strolleth about with a pig's bladder on a stick.³ (And he is a professional.)

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- 1 The parts of the world then ruled by Christians from Europe
 - 2 A sort of clown employed by the owner of the castle to entertain him and his guests
 - 3 A pig's bladder could be blown up to make the only kind of balloon you could get in medieval times.

This castle is a place of much wonderment
and

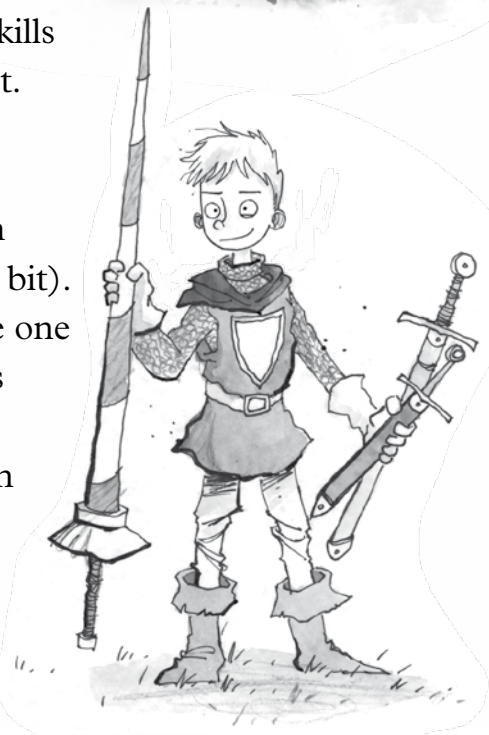
Wow!

It hath towers and dungeons, battlements
and kennels. I did not used to live in such a
beauteous place. I was sent here to learn to be
a knight. How wondrous is that? Of course, I
will not get to become a knight in the blinking
of a bat's eye. I am what is called a page in
training which, the truth be told, meaneth that
I am already a page but know not
exactly what I am doing AND
am earning a penny a
day for it!





I am learning my skills
and duties on my feet.
And on my bottom
(because training to
be a page one getteth
knocked over quite a bit).
When I have become one
of Widemoat Castle's
best pages there hast
ever been, I shall then
get promoted to a
squire in training.⁴



4 A squire carried his knight's shield and weapons, looked after his horse, carried his messages, and ran his errands, whilst acting as his apprentice and learning in ways. A page had to learn all the basics before being able to have THAT honour.

And then, when people marvel mightily at what a truly magnificent squire I have become, I shall be dubbed a KNIGHT. *Clappeth!* *Cheereth* Thank you. (Well, that be my plan, anyway. And it will take many years.)

Because coming to this castle of wonderment is

THE MOST IMPORTANT DAY IN MY LIFE SO FAR,

it is my plan to keep a diary of great secret. There be one teeniest of teeny problems, however. Few, if any, people of my age – or any age – can read or write, so I am writing this within my head.⁵

5 And not in QUITE the way someone from medieval times would have written OR spoken. This is one of the advantages of minding-reading: it translates the original words into something more FUN.

This meaneth that

ANYONE
READING THIS
OTHER THAN
MYSELF

is, most likely, a

- MIND-READER. -

Most strange, is it not?

For this must mean

YOU.

Let us commence!

Day 3

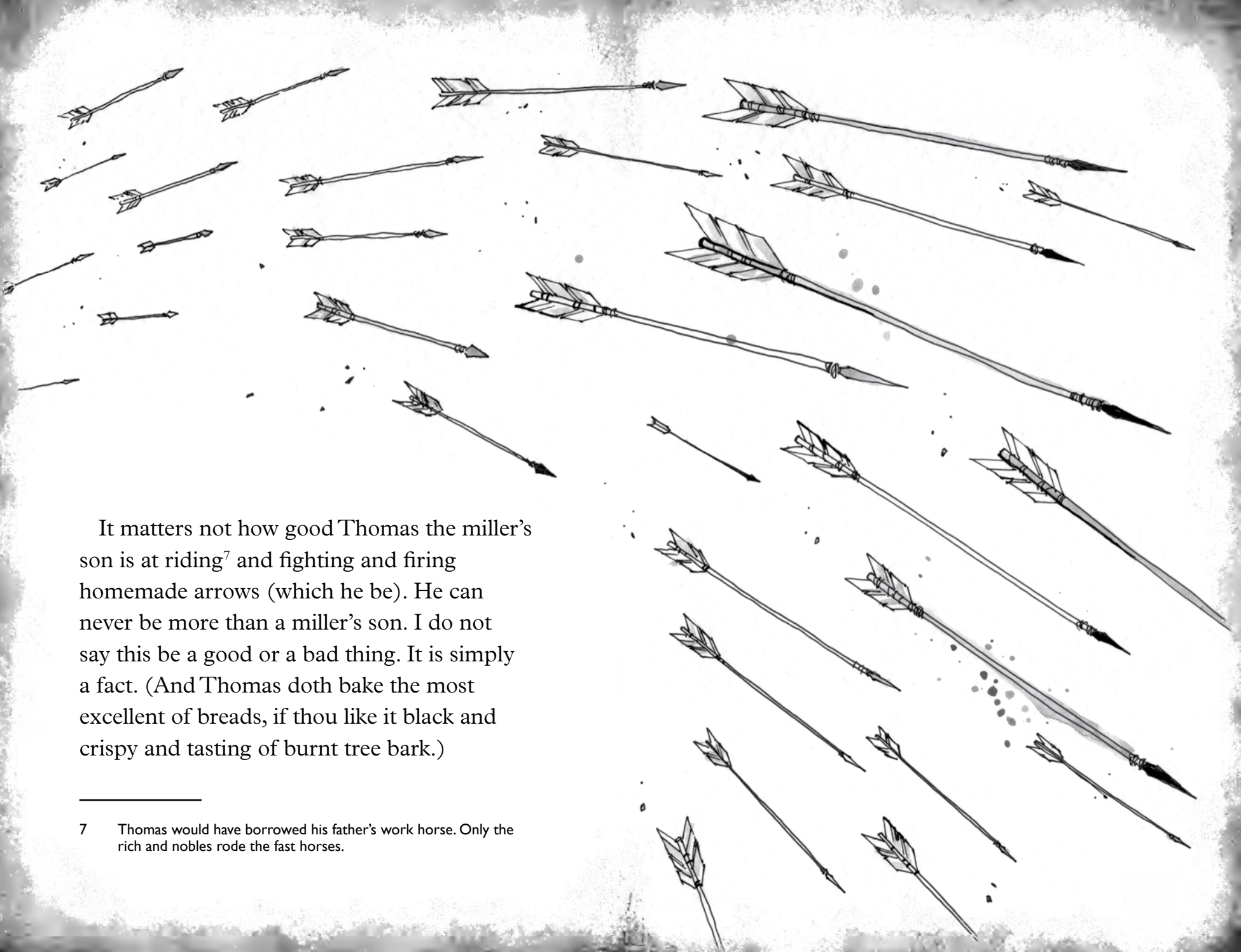
My brother Hubert ran into me today, which was about as welcome as the finding of a dead rat in the beef sauce⁶. Our parents are Sir Norman and Lady Drawbridge. You can guess which is which. (Clue: Do not try calling my father 'Lady' anything unless you find pleasure in being held upside-down by your ankles.)

It is not the son of just *anyone* who can train to be a knight. You have to come from a good and noble family. (And families do not come more good and noble than the Drawbridges.)

Gloweth with pride



⁶ Without fridges to store meat in, it went off very quickly. The bad taste could be disguised with rich sauces.

A collection of hand-drawn arrows of various sizes and orientations scattered across the page. The arrows are drawn in a simple, sketchy style with visible lines for the shafts, fletching, and arrowheads. They are scattered across the page, with some pointing towards the top right and others pointing in various directions. The background is a light, textured grey with some darker spots and smudges, giving it a hand-drawn or aged appearance.

It matters not how good Thomas the miller's son is at riding⁷ and fighting and firing homemade arrows (which he be). He can never be more than a miller's son. I do not say this be a good or a bad thing. It is simply a fact. (And Thomas doth bake the most excellent of breads, if thou like it black and crispy and tasting of burnt tree bark.)

⁷ Thomas would have borrowed his father's work horse. Only the rich and nobles rode the fast horses.