

The Whatsits' Rebirth

Book 5 of "A Wonderful Week for a Quest"



MICHAEL D. YOUNG

THE FIFTH QUEST RISES FROM THE ASHES

The Whatsit's Rebirth

Book Five by Michael D. Young



**Grimblewaith has a new partner.
His old one is still in his head.**

With Glock reassigned to Wizard Boot Camp, Grimblewaith is learning to work beside the high-strung Officer Zink. A battle with sand elementals, a risky trick with precious water, and an urgent summons from the palace launch their next impossible assignment.

THIS SAMPLE INCLUDES

**Chapter 1
A New Partner**

New to the quest? Book Five follows Leftbeard's Treasure with a fresh adventure, familiar whatsits, phoenix fire, and footnotes that still refuse to behave.

TURN THE PAGE. THE SAND WILL NOT WRANGLE ITSELF.

Chapter 1: A New Partner

Grimblewaith almost missed his old partner's shrill, nagging, maddening voice.

Almost.

Glock had nearly given her life to take out the glass golem barricading the palace. The technique of flying in one ear and out the other was more effective on lifeforms with squishy heads. The experience had left her with a broken body. It had not, however, taken her voice.

Though the powers that be had reassigned her to Wizard Boot Camp (Note: You may think magical schools are all like a buttoned-up British boarding school with an affable headmaster and a wacky assortment of professors. In our Beandom, it's not the least bit true. Prospective wizards must endure months of grueling magical calisthenics and training with no assurance they won't be incinerated or permanently turned into a salamander. Despite rumors to the contrary, no one actually gets better from that. This is all under the watchful eye of your wizarding drill sergeant (WDS), who makes it his personal mission to make you feel as tall as a pixie's pinky toenail. Glock became an infamous WDS, and it became something of a rite of passage to have her scream, "I don't give a hog's wart about your opinion!" at you.) after the incident, her voice remained as the ever-present scolding voice in his head.

"Hey, Grumble, get off your butt and get back in the battle!"

Though he heard the voice of his old partner, it was his new partner who said it. Officer Zink, a unique centaur, possessed a zebra's lower body and a man's upper body. The stripes, however, carried all the way from the lower body to the upper body and were dark green and white instead of the typical black and white. Oz, as Grimblewaith liked to call him, could be high strung on the best of days. But in the heat of battle, all that turned up to a number much greater than 10.

Grimblewaith stumbled to his feet, picking up a wooden club from one of his fallen foes. Sand elementals were pesky to pin down, and if you weren't ready to whack them when they popped out of the ground, they would clobber you first.

The sand stirred near his left foot, and he smashed it with all his might. The sand elemental, however, shot up next to his right foot, its form coalescing into a giant hammer that swung for Grimblewaith's midsection. The whamsit flew a short distance and sprawled out on the dunes. He groaned as he lay there, trying to catch his breath and staring up into the cloudless sky. These were creatures for whom Glock's tactics would have worked perfectly.

Stupid glass golem.

"Hey!" Oz cried. "Are you loafing around again? You are an officer of the law! You will help me bring these sandy cretins to justice!"

Rolling his eyes, Grimblewaith got to one knee and pushed himself up. Playing 'whack-a-sand' was not working. These elementals had attacked a village's water supply, trying to drain it for their own purposes. Without water, they couldn't retain other shapes, which made them far less formidable. It was time to switch tactics.

He reached down and took the canteen off his belt, which held his own meager water ration. As he undid the cap, he knew he would regret this later. Fresh water was so scarce these days that it seemed a shame to waste it. "Hey, I'm thirsty!" he cried. "Is anyone else thirsty?" Water flowed briefly from his upturned canteen. The nearest sand elemental changed direction, speeding directly at the wet patch on the ground.

He gauged the speed of the elemental, took a deep breath in, and readied his fist. When the elemental reached the water, Grimblewaith punched downward with all his strength.

The sand elemental spread out in a thin sheet, which happened only if they had been knocked unconscious. Chuckling, Grimbalewaith picked up the elemental, wadding it for storage in the sturdy chest attached to his griffin mount.

His elemental secured, he leaned on his griffin and called out to Oz. "I don't know what's taking you so long. Already got mine."

Oz spun, narrowly avoiding a sandy scimitar. "What? How did you do it? Lucky shot? Arcane ancient magic?"

Grimblewaith shrugged. "I gave it what it wanted. If you need help—"

"No!" Oz cried, slashing the air in a futile attempt to stop the sandy cockatrice that now danced around him. "Yours was probably luck anyway. I bet you sold your soul to a minor demon."

Grimblewaith shrugged again. "Suit yourself. I'm gonna let you do your thing. Oh, and finish the rest of these hunde beans."

"You leave those beans alone!" Oz cried, his striped face flushing. "We don't get another ration for a week."

The distraction gave his enemy the advantage. It changed into a giant approximation of a hunde bean (Note: These beans have strange flaps on each side, leading some to believe they resemble man's best friend. But I don't think they look anything like a silver-winged gimmel sprite), and beaned him upside the head. Oz roared and held the side of his head.

"All right! All right! You can have the beans! Show me what you did!"

Grimblewaith tossed a handful of the savory, roasted beans into his mouth, chewing slowly.

"Oh, I'll think about it. I actually am thirsty. Maybe if you throw in a round at the Black and Blue?"

The sand elemental turned into a drink stein and tried to ram Oz. The centaur countered, leaping to the side and slashing across the elemental's middle. The top half dissipated into the air, but the bottom half reformed itself and shot back into the ground.

"Fine!" Oz cried, throwing up his hands. "But only one round! We don't get paid enough for this."

Grimblewaith cleaned his hands then leisurely repeated the canteen trick. With the second elemental secure, he returned to his mount, facing Oz. "A simple thank you would be great," he said. "Oh, and that drink. Sand wrangling is thirsty work."

Oz started to complain, but another griffin landed only a bean's throw away, making both heads turn. A moment later, they both stood at attention. Captain Yeggins came from the mountains. He was hard to miss. His thick white hair covered most of his body, except for a black stripe across his chest.

He was one of the most feared fighters in the peacekeeping force.

He was also their commanding officer.

"At ease, officers," he said, trotting up to them. "The Chief wants to see both of you immediately. Return to the palace immediately and report to him."

Grimblewaith gestured to the chest containing the elementals. "Do we drop this off first? It seems pretty urgent if they called you out just to deliver the message."

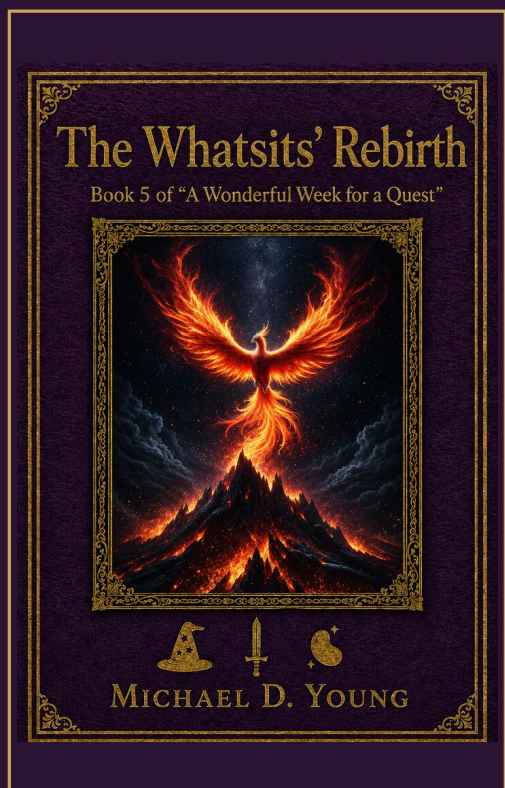
"I'll take the prisoners," Captain Yeggins said. "It's the two of you he wants. Don't bother asking me why, either. You might get a promotion. You might get the boot. You shouldn't keep him waiting."

With the prisoner transferred, Grumblewaith turned his griffin toward the palace and bounded into the air. As he flew, his old partner's voice returned a final time.

"Oh, you're gonna get it now!"

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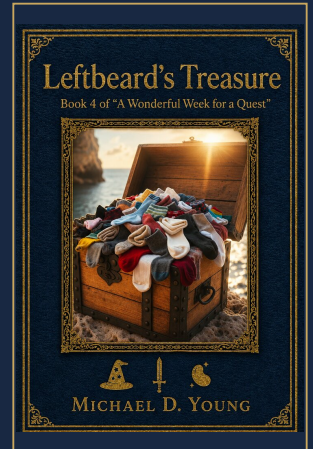
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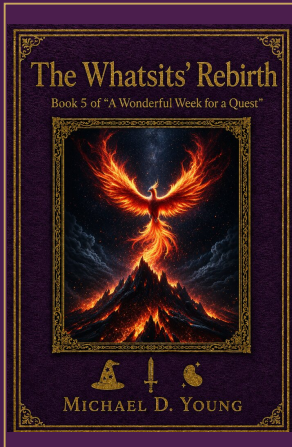
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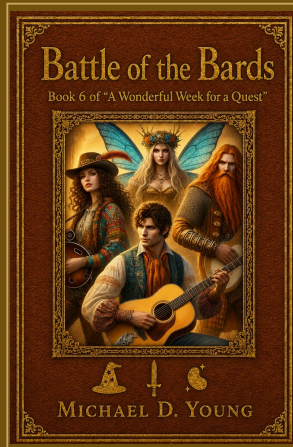
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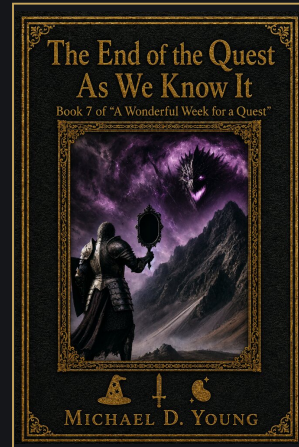
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