

# ANCIENT LARD:

A Performance Piece by Sir Newfield of Hampton Courte

Candlelight jittered across the tavern beams, catching in sticky pools of spilled ale and flashing against the gold leaf of a frayed parchment nailed crookedly to a post. Smoke from the hearth coiled low, mingling with the thick perfume of roasted meat and burnt drippings. Tankards thudded. Dice clicked. Conversation rolled like distant thunder until Sir Newfield climbed onto a wobbling stool and claimed the air. He then cleared his throat with a grinding gravel sound, raised a pewter tankard to the rafters, and offered this drunken doggerel:

"Hory, hory art thou, O munificent Lard!" he roared, voice seesawing between cathedral chant and tavern bellow. "To whom we've sung muny a robust canticle an' gravy-laden hymns!"

Forks paused mid-air. A lute string twanged and died. The tavern tilted into puzzled silence. Newfield's eyes went wide with reverence or madness – no one could tell which. He tracked an unseen choir circling the rafters.

"Of thy greatness there be not a shrank!" he declared, jabbing the air. "Thy wisdom ist rendered pure an' oft spoke of by befiggeled sages in kitchens most holy! His finger drifted upward as if following the ascent of a buttered seraph. "An' thy glyrie be caeld by crispy, lithesome angelic whuns, winged in cracklin' an' light!"

A ripple of confused laughter spread. Someone applauded cautiously.

Sir Newfield stepped down, leaning over a table of bewildered merchants, his voice dropping to a conspiratorial hiss. "Even in this earthly paradise – strumpeted by truppets an' fortified with formidable inebriants – pilgrims stagger while faithful throng toward thy cathedrals of cast iron as Exitel Castle's heralds baste smoked devil's arm!"

A few patrons chuckled, but Newfield slammed his fist on the wood, face flushed with mock-piety. "Thy majesty ist indeed grate! Und thy splundear hath made both Sonrise und Moonshine–un' cockeley rusters sing all night!"

He swept a low, dramatic bow, his feathered cap brushing the sawdust on the floor. "Thy noble pasteurs have oft said that only a fraction ah thy glyrie ist manifest, and the rest..." He paused, a mischievous glint in his eye, "is like hersumly nimble virgins, caefully veiled in frambesia."

Groans. Cheers. One confused blessing came from a tavern corner.

Sir Newfield downed some ale in one go, leaving the room in a state of confused, greasy grace. To a group of wealthy merchants, he lifted the tankard again, arm trembling with operatic devotion.

"Yet thou art a feisty one – O munificent Lard! As all thy people proclaimeth whilst toasting on the nir bus of Time itself – Gloria in excelsis aeternum in es daei-maon! Thy imperium rests upon the sky – an' the skillet!"

He drained some ale in a single heroic swallow, foam clinging to his mustache like sacred residue. For a heartbeat, the room held still – then erupted in applause, heckling, and demands for sausages. The performance ended in confused, greasy grace and at least three new converts to the Church of Charred Fat.

- T Newfields

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