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# Legends of King Arthur

# KING ARTHUR

King Arthur and his knights are the most famous characters from British history. They are well-known all over the world. There are poems, paintings, novels, films and musicals about the knights of the Round Table. Even a Disney cartoon about King Arthur, 'The Sword in the Stone', was produced. Nowadays he has become the symbol of courage, strength and goodness.

The story about King Arthur and his knights is very old. They say that there was a king in Britain between the years of 400 and 600. He fought the Saxons successfully and perhaps he was Arthur. It is quite possible that he lived in Wales or in the west of England.

In fact, nobody exactly knows who he was. According to legend, King Arthur ruled Britain with his beautiful queen Guinevere. He had about 150 knights at his court at Camelot. He chose them for their goodness and bravery. An old magician Merlin was his close friend and adviser. Arthur was a good

king and his reign was a time of peace for the British.

There are many legends about him and few facts. Many poems were written about him in the Middle Ages and later. Not every book about King Arthur and his knights has the same people and stories in it. Writers tried to make the stories more interesting and exciting. At that time people were interested in magic, knights and their ladies. So people fight with swords and use magic in these stories. The stories of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table are full of heroic deeds, adventure, love and hate.



## **THE SWORD IN THE STONE**

Many years ago, there lived a great and noble king Uther Pendragon. He ruled the country wisely and brought peace to England. He had an adviser Merlin, who made powerful magic.

Uther married beautiful Igraine and soon the king's son was born. Soon after he was

born, Merlin came to the king with terrible news.

'King Uther,' said Merlin, 'I can see into the future. Very soon, you will become ill and you will die. It will be a terrible time. There will be great wars in Britain. Your son will be in danger because your enemies will want to kill him. Let me take him away. He will live in a secret place there until he becomes a man.'

Uther and Igraine got very unhappy but they believed Merlin.

'Take our child to a safe place,' said King Uther. 'He must be out of danger.'

So, one dark night, Merlin took the baby away. He brought him to the castle of a good knight Sir Hector. The knight promised to take good care of the baby. Merlin told Sir Hector to name the baby Arthur.

Soon the king fell ill and died. The next sixteen years were terrible. There were many wars. Many castles and villages were burnt. The people needed a strong ruler to bring peace to Britain.

Merlin decided that it was time to reveal his secret. He went to London with a message for the Archbishop. Lords and ladies from all over the land came to hear what Merlin had to say.

'I have great news,' said Merlin. 'This land will soon have a new king. He will be wiser and nobler than Uther Pendragon. The new king will bring peace to this land. There will be no war and hunger in England.'

Merlin told the Archbishop to gather all the knights in the biggest church.

When the knights arrived, they saw a great stone outside. A shining sword was buried deep in it. On the stone, they saw the words written in gold letters:

*'Whoever pulls this sword out of the stone is the rightful king of Britain.'*

All the knights tried to pull the sword out of the stone. They pulled it with all their might, but no one could do that!

The Archbishop decided to send messengers across the land.

'You will tell our people about a tournament on New Year's Day. Everyone can try to pull the sword out of the stone,' the Archbishop said.

On the day of the tournament, knights came from every part of England. Among them was Sir Hector with his son Kay and Arthur who was eighteen years old. When they were in one of London streets, Kay suddenly cried:

'I have left my sword at home!'

Arthur rode back to bring it, but the gates were locked and no one was at home.

'What can I do?' Arthur thought. 'I have an idea. In one of London churchyards, I saw a sword in the stone. I'll bring it to my brother.'

Then Arthur rode quickly to London, came into the churchyard and easily pulled the sword out of the stone. Arthur knew nothing about the sword and the importance of his actions.

Kay looked at the sword and gave it to Sir Hector.

'Father, here is the sword out of the stone. I must be the rightful king of Britain!'

'Have you done it yourself, my son?'

'I am sorry, my father. It was not me. It was Arthur. He has given the sword to me.'

'Where did you get it from, Arthur?' asked Sir Hector.

'I pulled it out of the stone in the churchyard,' answered Arthur.

Sir Hector, Kay and Arthur rode back to the churchyard. All knights watched in surprise when Arthur pushed the sword into the stone. Then they tried to pull the sword out of the stone but couldn't do it. Then Arthur came to the stone and quickly pulled it out.

The sword shone brightly in Arthur's hand. Britain had a new king!

## THE ROUND TABLE

King Arthur wanted to have a castle for his court. He asked Merlin to make a strong castle on the top of the hill. Merlin made magic and a week later the king, his helpers and servants came to live in Camelot castle.

It was a real wonder. The castle was big and white with wonderful towers. Inside there was the Great Hall, the Dining Hall, the kitchen and the rooms of all Arthur's knights.

Then came time when King Arthur decided to marry. He asked his good friend Merlin for his advice.

'A king should have a wife. The kingdom needs a queen. Is there any lady that you love?' said Merlin.

'Yes, the lady Guinevere, the daughter of King Leodegrance. I love her, the most beautiful lady in the world. Will you go to her father and tell him that I want to marry Guinevere?'

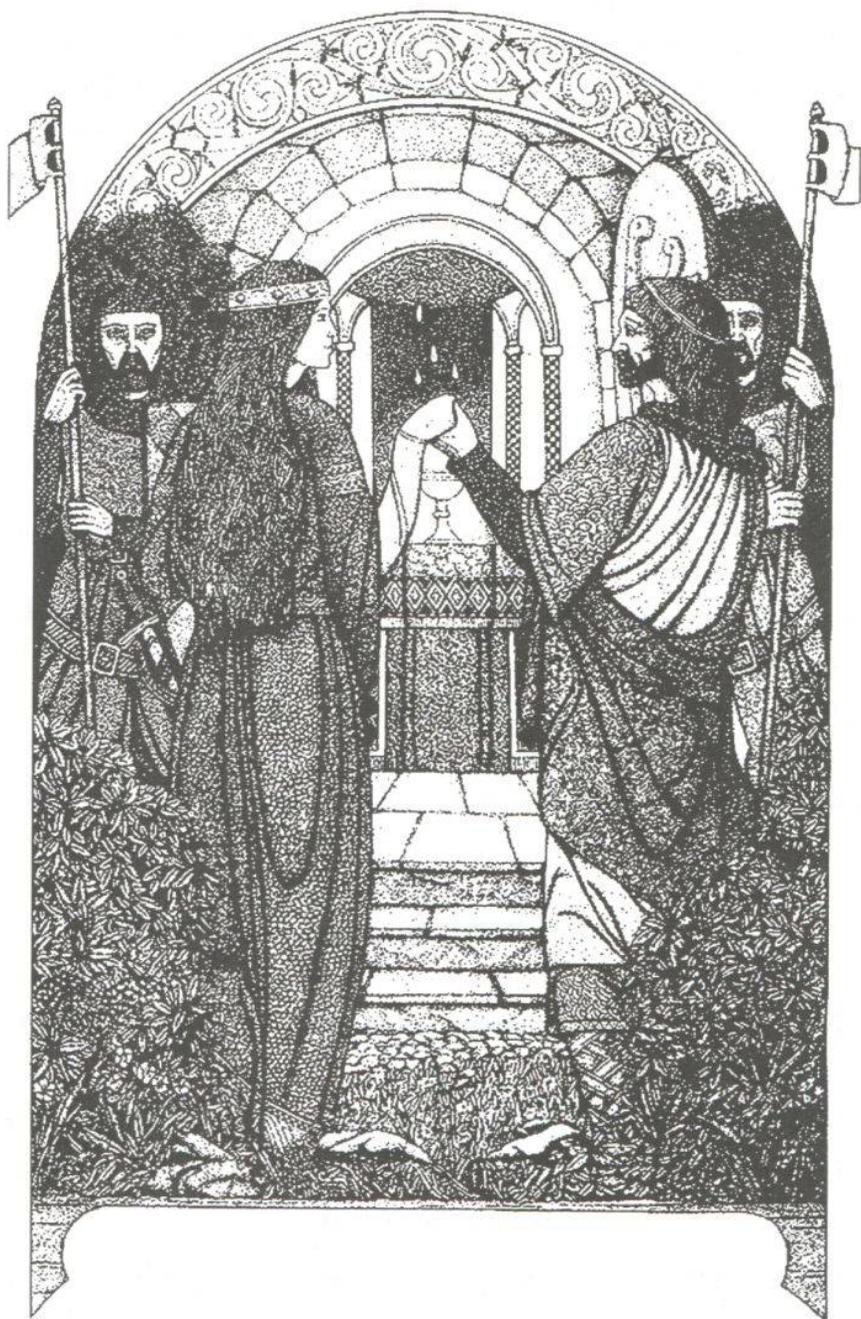
King Leodegrance was happy to hear the news.

'This is the best news I have heard!' he said. 'I am proud that such a noble and brave king as King Arthur wants to marry my daughter. I will send him a present — the great Round Table. Arthur's father gave it to me many years ago. One hundred and fifty knights can sit around it. I hope Arthur will like it.'

And so Merlin returned to King Arthur's castle with Guinevere and the Round Table. King Leodegrance also sent one hundred knights to serve Arthur and take place at the Round Table.

King Arthur was very happy to see Guinevere in his castle. He also asked Merlin to choose fifty noble knights for the Round Table. In a short time, Merlin found forty-six of the bravest knights in Britain.

Soon the wedding day came and the Archbishop came to Camelot to marry King Arthur and Lady Guinevere. All the people of the kingdom were invited to the wedding party.



After the wedding service, Arthur asked the Archbishop to bless each seat at the Round Table. Then the knights took their seats at the Round Table but four seats were empty. When Arthur and Guinevere came into the hall, Merlin asked the knights to stand and bow to their King and Queen. As the knights did so, gold letters appeared on each chair. Each chair had the name of the knight who sat on it.

'Let me tell you the wonders of the Round Table,' said Merlin. 'At this table all men are equal — no one sits at the head. When a knight is killed in the battle, a new knight will take his place. His name will also be written on the chair. The names of all knights who sit at King Arthur's table will live on forever.'

'But what about the empty seats?' asked King Arthur.

'One place is for the Black Knight,' said Merlin. 'You will soon meet him in a fight. Then he'll take his place at this table. Two more are for the brave knights who have not

come yet. This one is the Perilous Seat. The best knight must take it.'

All knights listened to Merlin carefully and no one asked him who the best knight was. Then King Arthur spoke to his knights as they sat at their table.

'Promise never to act unfairly. Promise always to show mercy to those who ask for it. Behave well towards women. Don't fight without good reason or for money and gold. If you break your promise, you will lose your place at the Round Table.'



## **EXCALIBUR**

Soon King Arthur heard about the Black Knight. He lived in the nearest forest and was one of the strongest men in Britain. He had fights with all the knights who were going through the forest. He was always the winner and killed a lot of them!

King Arthur decided to meet the Black Knight and talk to him. So he put on his armour and rode into the forest. He took Merlin with him who was the wisest man in the country.

They were going through the forest and suddenly saw a shield in the tree. There were some words on it:

*'Whoever passes this way will meet his death!'*

King Arthur struck the shield hard. A moment later he saw the Black Knight in black armour on a black horse.

'Why do you stop everybody who goes through the forest?' asked King Arthur.

'I do as I like,' said the Black Knight. 'If you want to go on, you must fight me first.'

'I will,' said King Arthur.

The fight began. Both knights were very strong and the fight went on for a long time. Suddenly King Arthur struck the Black Knight's sword so hard that his own sword broke in two!

When Merlin saw it, he decided that it was time to take action! So he put a spell on the

Black Knight. The next moment the knight fell into a deep sleep.

'What have you done?' asked the king. 'Have you killed the Black Knight with your magic?'

'He is only sleeping, my lord,' said Merlin. 'Come with me.'

Merlin took Arthur to an old man who lived deep in the forest. The old man knew of secret medicines. He used them to heal Arthur's wounds. Arthur was unhappy because he didn't have his sword anymore.

'Don't worry, my lord. Soon you will have a much better sword,' Merlin said.

Merlin asked Arthur to follow him. It was a long way through the forest. At last they came to a beautiful blue lake.

'Merlin, why have you brought me here?' Arthur asked looking at the blue water of the lake.

Suddenly he saw something very strange and surprising. In the middle of the lake an arm in white silk came out of the water. In the arm there was a shining sword.

'This is Excalibur,' said Merlin, 'the sword that I told you about. The Lady of the Lake will give it to you.'

Then they saw a beautiful lady. She appeared out of the lake and walked across the waters to them. Her hair was as red as fire, and her blue eyes were shining as the water of the lake.

'The Lady of the Lake lives under the water in a beautiful palace. She will tell you how to get the sword,' said Merlin.

The lady came up to the king and said to him:

'I am the Lady of the Lake. I have kept the sword for many years. This boat will carry you to the centre of the lake. So you will get the sword.'

Then Arthur saw a boat coming up to him. He got into it and the next moment the boat turned and sailed to the centre of the lake. Arthur easily took the sword from the arm and the arm went under the water. The boat turned once more and sailed back to the shore. Arthur wanted to thank the Lady of the Lake



but he didn't see her there. He jumped out of the boat and showed Merlin the sword.

'Which do you like best?' asked Merlin.  
'The sword or the scabbard?'

'I like the sword, of course,' said King Arthur.

'That is not a wise choice,' said Merlin.  
'The scabbard is more important. While you wear the scabbard, you will never lose a drop of blood. So keep it with you forever.'

The King Arthur and Merlin went back to the Black Knight. Merlin woke him up and the battle began again. Now Arthur had Excalibur and soon he won the battle.

The Black Knight fell to his knees in front of the king.

'Don't kill me, King Arthur!' asked the Black Knight.

'I will not kill you because you fight so bravely. Will you come to live in Camelot?' asked the king.

The Black Knight agreed and they made their peace.

## THE ADVENTURE OF KING PELLENORE

King Pellenore was one of the bravest knights of the Round Table. He loved adventures very much and travelled a lot. When he was back at Camelot, he spent much time riding in the forest. He loved dancing and singing and talking with other knights.

The Lady Vivien was one of the most beautiful ladies at Camelot. She was so beautiful that nobody thought that she was very wicked. The Lady Vivien liked King Pellenore and often talked with him about his adventures. One afternoon she asked him to go for a long ride with her through the forest.

When they were deep in the forest, they met a beautiful golden-haired lady.

'Good knight,' she said to King Pellenore, 'I ask your help. A young knight is badly wounded. We were riding to Camelot when somebody struck him with a sword.'

'I will help you,' King Pellenore said; 'lead me, young lady.'

But Vivien told him, 'Do not go with her. She may be a witch. Ride on with me.'

'She is no witch, but a good young lady,' said King Pellennore.

Then the golden-haired lady spoke again.

'Oh, good knight, help me! I must go to Arthur's Court to see my father. My dear knight is going to marry me. But first I want to talk to my father. Help us or he will die.'

'I will help you, lady,' said King Pellennore.

Vivien tried to stop him, but he followed the young lady. When the wicked woman saw that he was going to leave her, she made her horse throw her to the ground. There she lay soundless.

King Pellennore did not know what to do. He wanted to help the young lady but he could not leave Vivien. So he said:

'Young lady, I will help you. I have never wanted to help anyone so much as I do now. I must save your knight and bring you both to Arthur's Court. But let me first ride back with Vivien. Then I will come back here to you.'

'I am afraid it will be too late,' cried the young lady.

Then King Pellennore put Vivien on her horse. He tied her to its back by her long green scarf. At this moment she opened her eyes and said that she was very sick.

She made him ride very slowly to Camelot. King Pellennore did not talk to her. He was thinking all the time of the young lady. He took Vivien to Camelot and rode back to the forest as fast as he could.

He found the young lady and her lover in the forest. They were lying on the grass and their faces were as white as snow.

'Good knight, you are late!' the lady said, 'he is dead and I am dying.'

Then King Pellennore saw that the young knight was quiet, and that all the grass was red with blood.

'Ah, good knight,' said the lady, 'when you left me, a wolf ran out of the wood and killed my knight. The animal wounded me so badly that I am dying now.'

Then King Pellennore started crying.

'Why didn't I help you? I have done wrong.'

He sat down and took her golden head on his knee, and spoke to her gently till she died. Then he put their bodies on his horse and took them to Camelot.

Near the great hall he met Arthur and Merlin.

'I am a miserable man,' he said.

Then the wise Merlin said:

'You are more miserable than you know. This beautiful lady was your own daughter. She was stolen from you when she was a baby. Not long ago she learned who her father was. She was coming here to meet you.'

Then King Pellenore cried loudly.

'This is my punishment,' he cried, 'for not helping the young lady. She needed my help more than Vivien.'



## **SIR LANCELOT OF THE LAKE**

There came a time for Merlin to leave Camelot. Sadly he said 'goodbye' to Arthur and left him to rule the country alone. It was time for Merlin to sleep his long sleep, until the day came when he would wake up once more. Slowly Merlin walked away from the court at Camelot and out into the night.

The Lady Nimue was waiting for him. She led him on a long journey, until at last they

reached the court of Elaine. There he asked to see Elaine's son Lancelot of the Lake. He was called so because the Lady of the Lake took him when he was a baby and kept him hidden in her underwater palace for many years after the death of his father King Ban.

'Go to Camelot for the next tournament and tell King Arthur my last wish,' said Merlin to Lancelot. 'I want you to become a knight at the Round Table.'

Then the Lady Nimue took Merlin to an underwater cave. There he fell into a long sleep.

'I will wake up when Britain is in great danger,' were Merlin's last words.

Some months passed and in the middle of the next tournament, a mysterious stranger appeared in Camelot. King Arthur and Queen Guinevere were watching him with great interest. The strong and brave knight rode his horse beautifully and had a shining armour but his face was covered. He was a mystery.

'Welcome to the tournament!' said King Arthur to him. 'But who are you? Remember, no knight should be ashamed of his name.'

'First, I would like to fight the bravest knights at your court, King Arthur. Then I will tell you who I am,' said the knight.

Queen Guinevere liked the knight a lot — he was noble, strong and handsome.

'Can he fight as my champion?' she asked the king.

King Arthur loved Guinevere dearly and was happy to agree to anything she wanted. So he said to the knight:

'Fight well, the unknown knight! The royal honour is at stake!'

Out in the field, Sir Kay was the first to face Lancelot.

'I am sure that I will win,' said Sir Kay. 'Knight with no name! Let's see who is the best!'

The two knights took their lances and rushed at each other. But the unnamed knight was more skillful. A few moments later Sir Kay fell from the horse. The Knight with no name was the winner!

One by one, the best knights at King Arthur's court took their turn up against him,

and one by one, all were thrown down. At last the new champion turned to face King Arthur.

'You are very brave,' said King Arthur to him. 'Now it is time for you to tell us your name.'

Then the knight took off his helmet.

'I am Lancelot of the Lake,' he said. 'Merlin visited me and sent me here to become a knight at your court. For many years I lived in the underwater palace. The Lady of the Lake taught me to be brave and worthy of a place at your table.'

King Arthur smiled and was happy to have a knight sent by Merlin. He took Excalibur and gently touched Lancelot on each shoulder.

'Welcome, Sir Lancelot, the knight of the Round Table.'

That night Sir Lancelot took his place at the Round Table. His name appeared on an empty chair. Later, Sir Lancelot became the bravest knight at the court.

## THE KING WITH THE BADLY MADE COAT

One day when Arthur and his knights were at the Round Table, a young man entered. He was so big that the knights thought that he was a giant.

When the boy came closer to them, the king and the knights saw that he had on a coat which was too large for him. It was a rich coat, but it was old and dirty.

'My lord, my name is Brune. I can tell you no more than that. I ask you to make me a knight,' said the young boy.

At this Sir Kay laughed and said:

'He must be called The King with the Badly Made Coat.'

'Call me as you like,' said the young man. 'Yes, I'll take that name, but I will not tell you my real one.'

Then Arthur spoke to him in a kind voice:

'Young man, you ask a great thing. I must know where you come from, and who your father is.'

'My lord,' said the young man, 'I can't tell you that. But I am the son of a noble who was as big as a giant. My good father was very peaceful and didn't like fighting. That's why he never came to your court, and you did not hear of him. He lived at home with my mother and me, and the servants in our castle.

'He had only one enemy who wanted our lands. One morning when I was only a boy, my father and I were in the forest. My father was sleeping near the tree, and I was swimming in a small river. This enemy came up and killed my father with his sword. Then he rode away. I ran up to my dead father and took off his coat and put it on. I promised never to take it off, and never to tell my father's name or where I came from. I promised to kill my father's enemy.

'Then I rode home. There I found the enemy in our castle. I was a young boy at that time so I decided to wait for some years. I lived in the forest and practised a lot. Once a month I tried to pull up a young tree by the

roots. I wanted to be strong. This morning I have done it, and here, my lords, I am.'

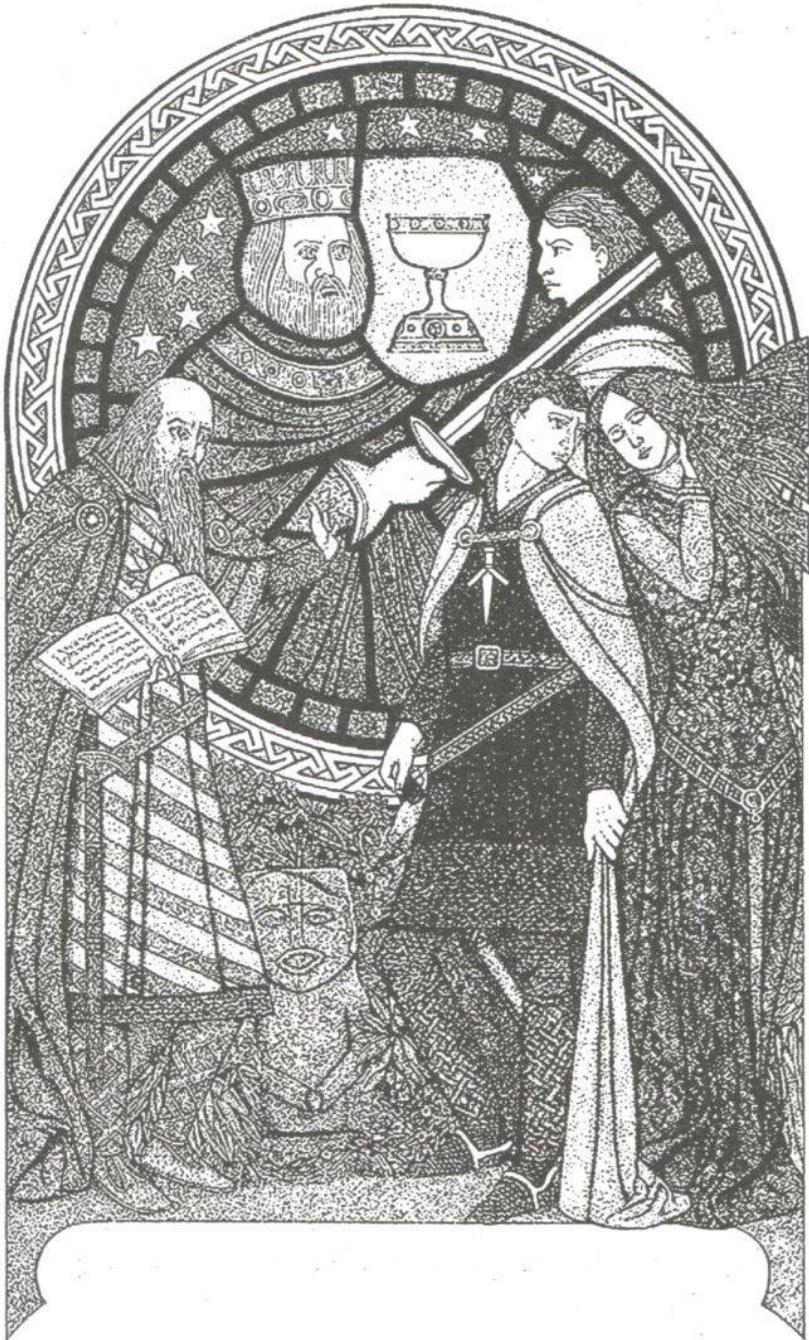
When the knights heard the story, they asked the king to make the young man a knight.

'I will teach him to use a sword and a lancer,' said one knight.

A few days later, all the knights went off to a tournament. Brune was in the castle yard practising some of the sword lessons. While he was hard at work, Queen Guinevere with twelve soldiers came up to him. When they were talking, they heard a terrible noise. Then they saw a big lion. Some minutes before the animal escaped from the tower. It was running towards them. The twelve soldiers ran away and left the Queen and Brune alone.

Brune didn't move. He put his sword down. The lion jumped at Brune. He caught its head in his hands. The next moment he broke the lion's neck.

At this moment the king and his knights came back. They saw a dead lion and understood everything.



King Arthur came up to Brune, touched his shoulder with his sword and said:

'Sir Brune, I make you a knight of my Round Table.'



## **SIR LANCELOT AND SIR BRUNE**

One day a young lady came to Arthur. She had a black shield with her.

'My lord, I came for a knight to undertake the adventure of the black shield.'

'And what is that adventure?' asked the king.

'I can't tell you,' answered the young woman, 'but it will be very dangerous.'

She looked carefully at each knight and then she came up to Sir Brune and said:

'Young Knight with the Badly Made Coat, will you take this shield?'

So Sir Brune and the young lady left Camelot. On their way through the forest Sir Brune began to talk to the young woman, whose name was Elinor. But she was quiet and Sir Brune thought that she didn't like him. His coat was so poor!

After a long time they came to a castle and Elinor said:

'Go in and you will find your first adventure...'

Sir Brune went inside the gate and saw one hundred knights.

'Quick!' he thought and the fight began. Suddenly he heard a low voice of a lady:

'Young knight, listen to me. Get to the left side of the castle wall. You will see a black stone in it. Strike the stone and a secret door will open. You can run out through it.'

That lady was the knights' prisoner. She felt sorry for Sir Brune and wanted to help him.

He turned his head and saw a black stone in the wall. Sir Brune was tired and had many wounds. However, he at last came to the door, struck it and the door opened. The knights shouted with anger but Sir Brune escaped.

He was very weak and he could hardly walk. Elinor ran to meet him and led him to a small river in a forest. There she took off his armor and bathed his wounds.

Sir Brune began to talk to her but she said:

'Do not talk to me. If you want to please me, go back to Arthur's Court.'

Sir Brune did not know why she spoke so, but he was too tired to think. So he lay down on the grass and went to sleep.

Meantime, at Arthur's Court Sir Lancelot learnt that Sir Brune had gone out with a young lady on the adventure of the shield.

'Oh!' cried Sir Lancelot. 'He will surely be killed. Merlin has told me what this adventure of the shield is. A lot of knights took it up and were killed.'

He called for his horse and armour, and said to the king:

'My lord, I will ride after this poor young man and help him. Perhaps I shall be too late; but if not, I shall ask him to give me this adventure of the shield.'

Then Sir Lancelot rode after Sir Brune. Near the small river, he heard the sound of a great battle. Sir Brune was fighting against six knights. Sir Lancelot rode to help and they won the fight.

Poor Sir Brune was almost dead. Elinor said:

'Take him back to Camelot. I do not want him to follow this adventure any longer. Sir Brune, I will tell you the truth. I love you and I am afraid you will be killed. That's why I want you to return to Camelot.'

Sir Brune was very glad, and he said:

'I must go on. When I finish this adventure, we will go back together to Arthur's Court.'

'Give this adventure to me,' said Sir Lancelot, 'and go back now with the young lady.'

But Sir Brune shook his head and they followed Elinor. Sometimes they rode

through woods full of wild beasts. Sometimes they went over fields where wicked magicians tried to put spells on them. They also fought with many knights.

However, they escaped all dangers.

One day Elinor told them that they were coming to the last adventure. She pointed to a strong black castle on a hill:

'It is Lord Brian's castle. At the gate you will see two huge dragons.'

At this Sir Brune gave such a loud shout that the dragons on top of the hill heard him.

'Ah!' cried Sir Brune, 'that is my enemy! He killed my dear father.'

He rode off quickly to the castle. There they saw the dragons. They were terrible creatures, all of green, with eyes and tongues of flame. Their wings were as large as the sails of a ship. Sir Brune had never seen a dragon before, but he was not afraid. He fought very bravely, and half an hour later the two knights killed the dragons. Then the castle door opened and a man came out.

'Come and fight. But only one,' he said.



'Let me go,' said Sir Brune.

Inside there were two knights, the Lord Brian's brothers. They were as huge as Sir Brune but Sir Brune overthrew them. Then Sir Plenorius, Lord Brian's cousin came out.

'Ah,' cried Sir Brune, 'where is Lord Brian? Must I fight with all his family before I meet him?'

Sir Plenorius struck Sir Brune and broke Sir Brune's helmet. Sir Brune fought bravely, but he became weaker and weaker. Then Sir Plenorius stopped fighting.

'I know you are the bravest knight,' he said. 'I loved your good father and was sorry for him. I have no love for my cousin but I must fight for him as long as he lives.'

Sir Brune fell down on the ground. Sir Plenorius took him in his arms into the castle.

Sir Lancelot couldn't wait no more. Then with great difficulty he climbed the castle wall and jumped down:

'Give me back my friend!' cried Sir Lancelot.

Then he began to fight with Sir Plenorius. Sir Plenorius was so much larger than Sir Lancelot was that he thought he could easily overcome him. But he couldn't.

'Ask for mercy!' said Sir Lancelot. 'I am Sir Lancelot of the Lake.'

Then Sir Plenorius said:

'Ah, my good lord, I know your name. If we go on fighting, you will certainly kill me. I ask you to treat me as I have treated Sir Brune.'

'You are a gentle knight. I am sorry you must help Lord Brian. He will die soon.'

Sir Plenorius answered:

'When he is dead, I will come to Arthur's Court.'

All this time Sir Brune was lying on the bed. But at last he came to himself and looked about him. He saw his sword and shield near him. He put them beside him. Suddenly he heard someone coming. It was Lord Brian. He knew that Sir Brune was there, alone and wounded, and he wanted to kill him.

'Ah, you are a coward. You are coming to kill me when I am badly wounded. But you make me forget my wounds,' Sir Brune cried and jumped out of the bed.

'You shall never go down by these stairs because I will kill you!'

The two began to fight in the room, and Sir Brune soon saw that his enemy was trying to push him close to the window. Lord Brian wanted Sir Brune to fall out of it.

Sir Brune started to push Lord Brian to the window. Then he lifted his shield and struck his enemy with it. The wicked lord lost his footing, and fell out of the window. He was killed to death at the feet of Sir Lancelot and Sir Plenorius.

When Sir Brune was well enough to travel, he visited all the castles of Lord Brian, trying to find his lost mother. He was very much afraid that she was dead, but at last he found her alive. He took her and Elinor to Arthur's Court. A few days later Sir Brune and Elinor got married.



## **SIR LANCELOT AND HIS FRIENDS**

One day Sir Lancelot and Sir Lionel left Camelot for a new adventure. They rode for a long time and got very tired. So they got off the horses and lay on the green grass. Soon Sir Lancelot fell asleep. Suddenly Sir Lionel saw a huge knight fighting with three other knights.

'He has won the battle. I would like to fight with him,' Sir Lionel thought.

When the huge knight saw Sir Lionel, he smiled. At the very first strike young Sir Lionel fell from the horse. The huge knight bound him to the other three knights and took them to his castle. There he threw the knights into a prison.

At Camelot Sir Hector had an idea to join Sir Lancelot and Sir Lionel. He rode after them and in the forest he met a man.

'Sir, are you looking for a new adventure? Look over there! Near the river there is a big tree. Near the tree there is a basin of copper. Go and strike on it three times.'

Sir Hector came to the tree and saw a lot of shields on it. Sir Lionel's shield was there, too. Sir Hector understood that Sir Lionel and other knights were prisoners.

He struck on the copper basin and at once he saw a huge knight.

'Come and fight!' cried the knight. 'I am the great Sir Turquaine.'

The fight began. Sir Hector wounded the huge knight once, but the knight wounded

him many times. At last the huge knight took Sir Hector under his right arm into the castle.

'You are very brave,' he said, 'you are the first knight who has wounded me. Be my helper and I will give you freedom.'

'Never,' said Sir Hector; 'I am a knight of King Arthur.'

'I am sorry for that,' said Sir Turquaine, 'then you are my prisoner.'

At that time Sir Lancelot was sleeping under the tree. Soon four beautiful ladies rode by. They recognized Sir Lancelot, the bravest knight in the land. One lady said:

'I will put a spell on him. We will take him to my castle. Then, when he gets up, he will choose one of us as his wife.'

In the morning Sir Lancelot got up and couldn't understand where he was. Soon a young lady came in, and he asked her to tell him what had happened to him.

'Sir, I cannot,' she said and left the room.

Then the four beautiful ladies came in.

'Choose one of us for your wife,' they said, 'and you will be very happy.'

But Sir Lancelot said:

'Oh, beautiful ladies, I don't want to marry. I would like to fight for my good King Arthur.'

'You will stay here till you choose,' they said and went out.

In the evening the young lady came to him.

'My lord,' she said, 'I can help you. These ladies are not kind to me, and I am going to run away. I will take you with me if you...'

'Name it!' he said.

'I am a king's daughter,' she said. 'My father is King Bagdemagus. He took part in a tournament, but lost it. He feels very sad. In two days there will be another tournament. I want you to help him.'

'I will,' said Sir Lancelot.

Then the young lady and Sir Lancelot left the castle quietly. They rode all night and in the morning they came to King Bagdemagus.

He was happy to see Sir Lancelot, the strongest and the bravest knight. All day there was music and dancing. But Sir Lancelot could not be happy.



'Where is Sir Lionel?' he thought.

On the morning of the tournament Sir Lancelot hid in a little wood near the tournament field. King Bagdemagus and his sixty men met another king with eighty men. They began to fight, and soon King Bagdemagus began to lose.

Then Sir Lancelot rode out of the little wood. No one could stand against him. The king asked Sir Lancelot to be his guest but Sir Lancelot shook his head. He had to find Sir Lionel.

On his way he met a young boy.

'Do you know any adventure which I can take? I am Sir Lancelot of the Lake.'

'Oh, Sir Lancelot,' said he, 'there is a knight Sir Turquaine. He has put in prison many of the Knights of the Round Table. You can fight against him for the freedom of your friends. Follow me!'

The young boy brought Sir Lancelot to the tree with the shields on it. Sir Lancelot struck on the basin but the huge knight came.

'Come and fight!' said Sir Lancelot.

'I will,' said Sir Turquaine. 'But later you will be sorry.'

Then the two rode at each other. They fought until they were breathless, they both had many wounds. Then Sir Turquaine said:

'I have never fought against such a strong man before. I would like to be your friend. You fight as the knight whom I hate most in this world. If you are not Sir Lancelot, I will give you my friendship and free all my prisoners.'

'Let's begin to fight again,' said Sir Lancelot, 'I am Sir Lancelot of the Lake.'

Then the fight began. Soon they gave each other so many wounds that the ground was covered with blood. Sir Turquaine was a strong man, but Sir Lancelot was stronger. After a long fight he fell on the ground and died.

Sir Lancelot came into the castle and opened the doors of the prison. He led the poor knights out. Sir Lionel and Sir Hector were happy to see Sir Lancelot.



## **HOW SIR LANCELOT SAVED THE QUEEN**

One spring day Queen Guinevere invited ten ladies and ten knights to have a ride in the forest. The next morning they met, all dressed in green, the colour of young grass.

It was a lovely morning. The queen and her company found a lot of spring flowers. They sat down on the green grass and enjoyed

the warm sun. Suddenly Sir Malgrace and eighty men in armour came out of the forest.

'I will carry you to my castle, Queen Guinevere,' Sir Malgrace said.

Then the ten knights drew their swords and fought against eighty men of Sir Malgrace. They fought bravely, but they could do little. Soon they were all wounded.

'Sir Malgrace, do not kill my noble knights! I will go with you,' cried the queen.

On the way to the castle of Sir Malgrace Queen Guinevere said to a young girl:

'Take this ring and give it to Sir Lancelot. Ask him for help.'

Sir Malgrace saw the young girl go but his men couldn't catch her.

'Madam,' said Sir Malgrace to the queen, 'I know that you have sent for Sir Lancelot, but you will never see him.'

Then Sir Malgrace told his eighty men to hide along the road and kill any knight they would see.

The little girl got to Camelot and gave the ring to Sir Lancelot. He put on his armour and

left Camelot. At last he got to the road leading to Sir Malgrace's castle.

The men of Sir Malgrace shot hundreds of arrows at him. His white horse was killed and he was badly wounded. He could hardly walk but he came up to the castle gate:

'Come out, traitor! Come out and fight!'

Sir Malgrace was afraid of Sir Lancelot. So he went to Queen Guinevere and said:

'My queen, remember how I saved your ten knights. I am really sorry I took you prisoner. Please, go to Sir Lancelot and ask him not to fight. He will be my guest and tomorrow you will all go back to Camelot.'

Then the queen said:

'Peace is always better than war.'

She went to Sir Lancelot and asked him to come into the castle. Then Sir Malgrace took Sir Lancelot to his room. Sir Malgrace opened the door and the next moment Sir Lancelot was deep down in the darkness. There was a trapdoor in the floor!

In the morning, the queen and her company left for Camelot.

'Where is Sir Lancelot?' asked Queen Guinevere.

'He left my castle for Camelot yesterday evening,' answered Sir Malgrace.

The unhappy Sir Lancelot was in the trap. He was hungry and thirsty for two days. At night, Sir Malgrace came and looked down to see if Sir Lancelot was dead. One night a little girl saw Sir Malgrace looking down the trap.

'What is down there? Who is hiding there?' she thought.

So at night she opened the trapdoor. When she saw Sir Lancelot, she was very sorry for him. She let him climb up by the rope, and took him out of the castle. At night, Sir Malgrace looked down the trap, but he heard nothing. So he thought that Sir Lancelot was dead.

In the morning, Sir Malgrace went to King Arthur.

'You wanted to take my queen. Is it true?' asked King Arthur.



'My lord, I didn't take her. Queen Guinevere came with me because she loved me.'

Then the King got very angry. Suddenly in came Sir Lancelot. He ran up to Sir Malgrace and cried:

'Come and fight!'

'Mercy!' Sir Malgrace cried.

Now Sir Lancelot couldn't kill him because that man asked for mercy. So he said:

'Traitor, I will take off my helmet and tie my left hand behind my back. Then I will fight against you.'

'So I will win,' Sir Malgrace thought.

The fight began and Sir Malgrace ran to Sir Lancelot with his sword. Sir Lancelot waited until he was very near, and then stepped aside. Before Sir Malgrace could turn, Sir Lancelot cut Sir Malgrace helmet in two. And Sir Malgrace fell dead on the ground.

## THE DEATH OF ARTHUR

King Arthur ruled England for many years. Yet there were traitors and one of them made war against Arthur. The king and his knights left Camelot to meet them.

Sir Modred ruled at Camelot that time. Now Sir Modred hated the king and raised a rebellion against Arthur.

King Arthur returned home and fought against Sir Modred. He lost many of his knights but he drove the traitors away from Camelot. The last great battle took place on the seashore.

Before the battle Arthur said:

'Sir Bedivere, I have had a dream. I know I will die today.'

'My lord, it is a dream,' answered Sir Bedivere. 'You are great. Today you will win the battle.'

Arthur shook his head.

'I don't want it. It is hard to fight against my own people.'

It was a grey day with no sun. The mist was so thick that no one could see anyone. Friends fought against each other. The battle went on all day long and in the evening everything got quiet. The mist went away and Arthur looked over the field. He saw only one man standing. The others were dead. The king's face was white.

'They all have died for me. I am king only of the dead.'

The only living man was Sir Modred, the traitor. Arthur lifted his good Excalibur and the fight began. Sir Modred struck the king on the head and cut the helmet through. Arthur was badly wounded, but he killed Sir Modred.

Arthur fell to the ground and said to Sir Bedivere:

'Now the time has come! Take Excalibur, go to the lake and throw it into the water.'

Sir Bedivere took the sword and went to the lake. When he was ready to throw the sword far out into the water, the moon came from behind the clouds. The light fell on the sword, and Sir Bedivere saw how beautiful

the sword was. So he hid it, and returned to the king.

'What did you see or hear?' asked Arthur.

'I heard the wind and saw the waters of the lake.'

'You haven't thrown the sword in the lake. Go back now, and throw it far out into the lake.'

Sir Bedivere went back and looked at the sword and said:

'No, I can't throw away Excalibur. I will keep it and people will remember the king forever.'

So again Sir Bedivere hid the sword and returned to the king, who asked:

'What have you seen or heard?'

'I heard a very strong wind and saw the shining blue waters of the lake.'

'You are a traitor!' Arthur cried. 'Go now, and throw Excalibur out into the lake.'

Sir Bedivere ran to the lake, took the sword, closed his eyes and threw the sword far away. The next moment an arm in white came out of the water and caught it. Then the

arm took the sword down into the lake. Sir Bedivere went back and told the king what he had seen.

'Now, take me to the lake,' said King Arthur.

Near the blue water of the lake they saw a big black boat. In the boat there were three beautiful ladies with gold crowns.

They came to take Arthur away, Sir Bedivere did not know where. The queens put Arthur into the boat.

'Oh, King Arthur, you are leaving me. The great Round Table is broken up forever. What shall I do?' said Sir Bedivere.

'Old customs pass and new ones come. God makes his world better in many ways. The Round Table did its work and now has disappeared. My work is done. Farewell!'

Then the boat moved slowly away. Sir Bedivere watched it until it disappeared.