

KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS

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CHAPTER ONE

Young Arthur

In the year 493, Uther Pendragon became King of Britain. He had a counsellor named Merlin. Merlin was also a magician.

When King Uther's son Arthur was born, Merlin said, 'Your son must grow up away from the court. It is safer!'

Merlin gave the baby son to Sir Ector and his wife. They raised him well.

When King Uther died in 509, Britain had no king. The country had many problems.

Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury and said, 'Britain must have a king. We must find one. Call all the noblemen of the kingdom. Tell them to meet at the great church in London on Christmas Day. There, God will show us the new king.'

On Christmas Day, all the noblemen were in the great church. Outside the church there was a big stone with a sword in it. These words were written on the big stone:

He who pulls the sword out of this stone
Is the true King of Britain.

CHAPTER TWO

The Sword in the Stone

Each nobleman tried to pull the sword out of the stone. No one was able to do it.

On New Year's Day, the sword was still in the stone. Arthur was there with Sir Ector.

Arthur pulled the sword out of the stone without difficulty! This was the sign from God. All the noblemen were surprised. He was the new King of Britain.

Sir Ector said, 'Arthur, you are now the King of Britain.'

Arthur said, 'Father, I don't want to leave you!'

Sir Ector said, 'I'm not your real father. I don't know who you are. The magician Merlin brought you to us when you were born. I raised you like a son, and I love you. Now you are a king. God wants you to lead Britain. You must go and do your duty.'

Merlin said to the noblemen, 'This is King Uther's son and he is our new king!'

Young Arthur first became a knight. Then he became King of Britain.

CHAPTER THREE

Britain has a King

Arthur was a young king. He was about twenty years old. He lived at Camelot. His first years as king were difficult. He fought against many enemies from other lands, particularly the Saxons. Some noblemen of his court caused trouble, they did not want to obey a young king.

King Arthur was very adventurous. He liked riding his horse and looking for adventures. He was courageous, loyal and friendly. His people loved him.

One day, King Arthur was riding in the forest. He saw a fountain. Near the fountain there was a knight named Sir Pellinore.

'Stop!' said Sir Pellinore. 'You cannot go past the fountain! You must fight with me first!'

King Arthur answered, 'I'm ready to fight!' The two knights began fighting. First they fought with their lances Then they fought with their swords.

During the fight, Arthur's sword broke. Sir Pellinore said, 'I'm the winner!'

At that moment, Merlin appeared and said, 'Pellinore, this knight is your king! King Arthur!'

Sir Pellinore stopped fighting immediately.

CHAPTER FOUR

Excalibur

Arthur away with Merlin and said, 'I broke my sword during the fight with Sir Pellinore. I am king because of that sword. I must have another sword.'

'Come with me then,' said Merlin.

Arthur followed Merlin to a lake of clear water. In the middle of the lake, Arthur saw an arm. The arm was holding a sword in a beautiful scabbard.

'Look!' said Merlin. 'That is the sword and that is the Lady of the Lake. Ask her kindly and the sword is yours.'

Arthur saw a beautiful lady in a boat on the lake. He asked her, 'Can I have

that sword?'

She answered, 'Yes, you can have it. Take my boat and go and get it.'

Arthur and Merlin went to the middle of the lake. There Arthur took the sword. He was very interested in it. He took the sword out of the scabbard and looked at it. It was a beautiful sword with jewels on it.

'Look, Merlin,' he said, 'the word Excalibur is written on it.'

'Yes, Excalibur is the greatest sword in the world. But its scabbard is more precious.'

'Why?' asked Arthur.

'It has a great magic power,' said Merlin. 'When you wear it, you never bleed even if you are wounded. When you fight, you must always have the scabbard with you.'

CHAPTER FIVE

Arthur meets Guinevere

A lot of enemies tried to invade Britain: the Saxons, the Jutes, the Pitts and others.

A big army of Saxons attacked King Leodegrance in his castle. He was the King of Cameliard. Young King Arthur and his knights fought against these Saxons and won.

King Leodegrance was very thankful to Arthur. He invited him and his knights to a royal banquet. At the banquet, Arthur met the King's daughter, Princess Guinevere. Guinevere was young and very beautiful. Arthur fell in love with her. He wanted to marry her.

Merlin wasn't happy with Arthur's choice but he accepted his king's decision.

King Leodegrance, Guinevere's father, was very happy about this marriage. 'I am honoured to give my daughter to our courageous king!' said Guinevere's father. 'My gift to King Arthur is the Round Table, which belonged to his father, King Uther.'

Arthur and Guinevere were married. There was an enormous banquet. Everyone in the kingdom was happy.

Guinevere arrived at King Arthur's castle with her ladies and the Round Table. The enormous Round Table had places for 150 knights. Arthur called the best knights of Britain to sit at the Round Table. Only the bravest knights were part of Arthur's court.

CHAPTER SIX

The five Kings

King Arthur and Queen Guinevere were very happy together. The people loved their beautiful queen.

Not long after their marriage, there was another invasion of Britain. The King of Ireland, the King of Denmark, and three other kings joined together. They wanted to conquer Britain with their strong armies.

'We must fight these five kings,' said King Arthur. 'We must protect Britain.'

The knights of the Round Table were ready to fight against the enemy.

Before leaving Camelot, Arthur said to Guinevere, 'Dear Guinevere, I don't want to leave you alone. Please come with me. I promise to protect you. Your lovely presence gives me happiness and courage.'

Guinevere smiled and said, 'Arthur, I am happy to follow you.' Queen Guinevere rode next to King Arthur. King Arthur's army followed. After travelling for many days they did not meet the five kings.

Suddenly one night, the five kings attacked King Arthur's camp. They almost destroyed the camp. The noise of the battle woke up King Arthur. He, Guinevere, and the other knights rode away quickly. They crossed the River Humber and went to the forest. Then they heard horses across the river. In the moonlight, they saw the five kings. The kings were riding towards them, and they were alone.

One knight said, 'Let's attack them by surprise! They're alone! They can't see us, but we can see them!'

King Arthur and his knights killed the five kings.

The enemy armies were confused without their leaders.

They all left Britain. King Arthur and his knights were again victorious. They saved Britain from a dangerous invasion.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Lancelot

One of the knights of the Round Table was Lancelot. He came from France. Lancelot was very kind and generous. He often gave his things to the poor. Lancelot served his king and queen well. One day a strange girl came to the great hall of the castle. She said to Sir Lancelot, 'Come with me! It's very important. I cannot tell you more. Please follow me.'

Sir Lancelot followed the girl to the forest. They stopped at a church.

Lancelot entered the church. He saw twelve nuns. One nun said, 'Sir Lancelot, we bring you this young man. He is loyal and courageous. Please make him a knight.'

The young man looked honest. Lancelot agreed to make him a knight.

However, Lancelot did not recognize this young man. He was the son Lancelot had from Elaine, a lady he loved some years before. The young man's name was Galahad. Galahad's mother wanted him to be a knight, like his father.

The next day, Lancelot returned to Camelot with the young knight. King Arthur, Queen Guinevere and the knights of the Round Table were happy to meet Galahad.

When Sir Galahad sat down at the Round Table, his name appeared on the table! Everyone was amazed. Lancelot looked at Galahad carefully. Suddenly, he realised that Galahad was his son! Lancelot was very happy and proud.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Holy Grail

One day the knights were sitting at the Round Table. They were celebrating a religious holiday. Suddenly, there was a loud noise. Then there was a strong light.

A green bowl covered with a cloth moved around the room. Invisible hands carried it. After a few moments, the green bowl disappeared.

'That was the Holy Grail!' exclaimed King Arthur. 'That is where Christ's blood was kept after he was crucified.'

The knights were amazed. They all wanted to see the Holy Grail.

Sir Gawain, a loyal knight, declared, 'I want to look for the Grail for one year and one day.'

'Yes, I want to look for the Grail too,' said another knight.

All the knights wanted to travel to distant lands to find the Holy Grail. There was great excitement at the Round Table.

King Arthur was very worried. He knew that the search for the Holy Grail was dangerous. In fact, many knights died during the search. Others never returned to Camelot.

Only three knights found the Holy Grail. They were Galahad, Percival and Bors. All three had pure hearts. Only those with pure hearts saw the Holy Grail. The three knights travelled to distant lands. After many dangerous adventures, they found the Holy Grail.

When they saw it on a silver table, they thanked God for this great happiness. After finding the Grail, Galahad and Percival died. But Bors returned to Camelot. He told everyone about his wonderful experience.

CHAPTER NINE

King Arthur goes to Avalon

King Arthur lived a long life, but it finished sadly. In the search for the

Holy Grail, many of his knights left Britain. Other knights died. Arthur was alone.

In 537, King Arthur went to a distant land to fight. Sir Gawain and other loyal knights went with him. Before leaving Camelot, King Arthur spoke to a knight called Mordred. He said, 'Mordred, I ask you to rule my land until I return. I know you are a loyal man.'

King Arthur and his knights left Britain to go to war. But Mordred was not loyal. He wanted to take King Arthur's place. He wanted to be King of Britain!

So Mordred told everyone that Arthur was killed in the war, in France. Mordred became King of Britain! He was made King in Canterbury.

When King Arthur heard the news, he was furious. He returned to Britain immediately. He and his knights arrived in Dover. Here he found Mordred and his army. They were waiting for him.

There was a long, terrible battle. Only King Arthur and Sir Bedivere remained alive. Sir Gawain died in Arthur's arms. The King buried him in Dover Castle.

Arthur fought a long battle against Mordred.

At the end of the battle, King Arthur took his spear and killed Mordred. But Mordred's sword went through Arthur's helmet and his head.

The great king was dying! He still had to do one thing. He called Sir Bedivere and said, 'I must give my sword

Excalibur back to the Lady of the Lake. Take it to the lake. Then throw it far into the water.'

Sir Bedivere went to the lake. He threw Excalibur far into the water. An arm came out of the water and caught the sword. Then it disappeared into the water.

Sir Bedivere returned to King Arthur. He told him about what he saw at the lake. Arthur was satisfied and said, 'Thank you, my loyal friend. Now carry me to the lake.'

At the lake, there was a boat waiting for Arthur. The Lady of the Lake was in it.

'Put me in the boat,' said Arthur. Sir Bedivere obeyed and said, 'What can I do without you, my king?'

Arthur answered, 'My life is near the end. Pray for yourself! Prayers can do many things. Farewell! I am going to Avalon.'

The boat moved away slowly. Sir Bedivere watched the boat on the lake until it disappeared.

- THE END -

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