

The Legend of King Arthur

Legends are stories handed down from earlier times. They are often based on events in history or real heroes from the past. No one is sure whether King Arthur really lived or not. But there probably was a strong military leader named Arthur who lived in Wales between the years 400 and 600 A.D. At the same time, a character named Arthur was the hero of magical legends.

The first stories about King Arthur were written over a thousand years ago. During the Middle Ages, Arthur was the most popular hero in English and French literature.

As new legends were written, the story changed. Characters from other legends were brought into the King Arthur legend. And stories about other kings were changed to make Arthur the hero.

What made people admire King Arthur so much? At first, writers saw him as a strong leader. This was something the people may have needed but didn't have. During the Middle Ages, writers saw King Arthur as a sensitive, civilized man. And the Round Table, where Arthur met with his knights, became an example of a wonderful past—a time when life was simple and noble.

In "The Legend of King Arthur," which you are about to read, you can see the importance of justice in King Arthur's court. You can understand Sir Lancelot's sense of honor. And you can feel the sadness of the love between Arthur and Guinevere.

It was Christmas Eve of the year 500. All the knights, lords, and kings of Britain were at a church in London. They had gathered to pray for help.

King Lot of Orkney stood up to speak. "Even now, Saxon soldiers are crossing the sea from Germany," he said. "They plan to take over Britain. They must be stopped!"

King Mark of Cornwall spoke up. "The Saxons are skilled in war. If they invade Cornwall, how can I stop them? My army is small."

The other kings and lords and knights nodded in agreement.

Then the Bishop of London spoke. "This is a dark age for Britain. The country is divided into too many small kingdoms. We need a leader who can lead us all against the Saxons. Can't we agree to fight together under a single leader?"

Then the kings, lords, and knights began to argue among themselves. Different nobles wanted different leaders. No single person seemed strong enough or wise enough to bring them all together.

Finally the Bishop of London said, "Let us pray that a new king will rise. We must keep our eyes open for a sign."

When the nobles left the church, their eyes opened in wonder. A huge stone was in the churchyard where nothing had been before. A powerful sword had been driven into the stone, halfway to the handle.

These words were carved on the stone: *Whoever pulls this sword from this stone is the true King of Britain.*

The nobles crowded around the stone.

One by one, they tried to pull the sword out. None of them could move it at all.

"This must be very strong magic," King Mark said.

A thin, bearded man in a long brown cloak stood at the edge of the churchyard. It was Merlin, the court wizard of the late King Uther. Merlin had great magical powers and could see into the future. He knew who would finally pull the sword from the stone. And he knew that this person was miles and miles away on that Christmas Eve.

Young Arthur

Spring came, and still Britain had no king. But young Squire Arthur wasn't worried about this. He was too busy learning how to be a squire for his brother, Sir Kay.

At Easter, there was a big tournament in London. It would be Sir Kay's first chance to prove himself as a knight. He was nervous, but he tried to cover this up by bragging a lot. He also bossed Arthur around more than usual. Arthur tried to be helpful, but it wasn't easy to please Kay.

Many people went to London for the tournament. The air was filled with brightly colored flags. The streets were crowded with people, both rich and poor, all in their finest clothes.

Before his first jousting match, Sir Kay rode to the jousting field. Arthur ran along behind his horse.

Kay suddenly realized that he had left

his sword back at the inn. He blamed it on Arthur.

"You idiot!" he cried. "You forgot to hand me my sword this morning. Run back and get it."

Arthur knew it was his duty to follow Kay's orders, so he ran back to the inn. When he got there, it was locked, for the innkeeper had gone to the jousting matches for the day.

Arthur glanced at the church across the street. He saw a sword sticking out of a huge stone in the yard. He didn't know why it was there. All he knew was that he had to borrow it for a while.

When Arthur grabbed the sword, it slid out of the stone. He carried it swiftly to Sir Kay and explained, "I couldn't get your sword. But I found this one."

Sir Kay recognized the sword. His mind worked quickly.

He went over to his father and cried, "Look! Here is the sword from the stone! I must be the true King of Britain!"

The crowd around them fell silent. But Kay's father, Sir Ector, was suspicious. He knew that Kay sometimes told lies.

"Did you pull this sword out of the stone?" he asked.

"It's here, isn't it?" said Sir Kay.

"I want to see you pull it out again," Sir Ector said.

Sir Ector and Sir Kay rode to the church. Arthur ran behind them, and the crowd followed.

Sir Ector pushed the sword back into the stone. Sir Kay tried to pull it out again, but failed.

Kay hung his head. "I didn't pull the sword out, Father," he said. "I don't know

who did. All I know is that Arthur brought it to me."

Everyone turned to look at the young squire. Arthur explained, "Kay needed a sword, so I borrowed this one. I am sorry if I did something wrong."

Sir Ector said, "Try to pull it out, Arthur."

Arthur grasped the handle of the sword. He hardly had to pull at all. The sword slipped smoothly out of the stone.

The people in the crowd fell to their knees. Arthur stood with the sword in his hand, confused.

"What does this mean, Father?" he asked.

Sir Ector sighed and said, "I am not your real father, Arthur. I adopted you when you were a baby. You were brought to me by a stranger in a long brown cloak. He told me to love you like a son, and I have. But now we must learn who you really are."

Just then, the stranger in the brown cloak entered the yard. People in the crowd whispered, "It's Merlin! It's Merlin!"

Merlin walked up to Arthur and said, "Arthur, you are the true King of Britain. You are the only son to the late King Uther Pendragon. Your father was killed in a battle when you were a baby. I took you to Avalon, the Land of Mystery, where a spell was placed upon you. You shall be the greatest king this land shall ever know."

The crowd stared at young Arthur. He stood straight and held his head high. The people felt they were at the beginning of a great age.

"Hail to King Arthur!" they shouted.



The New King

It wasn't easy to be accepted as King of Britain. Many of the other kings didn't want to be ruled by a teenager. So Arthur had to prove himself in battle.

First, he had to fight the Saxons who were attacking southern England. Arthur formed an army of loyal knights and led them. Soon they drove the Saxons out of that part of the land.

Next, Arthur struggled to gain control of the rest of Britain. Some kings fought

hard against Arthur and his knights. But others were willing to join Arthur's army. They were glad to be protected by a strong king.

Arthur's army grew larger and more powerful. Soon all the British forces were under his leadership.

The Saxons were still attacking parts of Britain. But now the British forces were united. Arthur had become a skilled general. The Saxons finally gave up and sailed back to Germany.

All of this took 10 years. After so many



years of war, Arthur was eager to have peace. He was glad to go home to his beautiful castle, Camelot.

One day, shortly after Arthur returned to Camelot, he and Merlin walked to a lake near the castle. Arthur said, "Merlin, you must help me plan for the future."

Merlin nodded, but said nothing. He walked to a small boat at the edge of the lake. He stepped into it, waving for Arthur to follow, and Arthur followed him.

The boat glided to the middle of the lake. Suddenly, an arm rose out of the

water near the boat. It was the arm of a woman, and she held a golden sword.

Arthur took the sword. Then the hand disappeared into the water.

"This sword is called Excalibur," Merlin said. "It is a gift from the Lady of the Lake. Your first sword was a sword of war. Excalibur is a sword of peace."

"But this sword looks stronger than my other one," said Arthur.

"It is more difficult to keep peace than it is to fight a war," said Merlin. "You must be very strong to rule in peace."

Arthur felt it was time to form a royal court at Camelot. At Easter, he invited all his knights to a great feast at the castle. They came from all over Britain.

The knights who gathered in the courtyard were rude and rough. They bragged about their skills in battle. They argued about who would get to sit at the head of the dining table. Arthur watched them from a window and sighed. It would take a lot to civilize these men.

When Arthur opened the door to the dining hall, the knights pushed their way in. Then they stopped and stared at the hall. It had a high ceiling and stained-glass windows. In the center was a huge round table with 150 chairs around it.

Arthur sat in a chair which was like everyone else's. "Merlin made this table for me," he said. "When we sit here, no knight will be more important than any other. Each one will be judged by how well he behaves as a knight."

The knights hurried to the table. Each chair had a name written on it in gold.

Arthur explained, "When a man becomes worthy of joining us, his name will

appear on an empty chair. When a knight loses his honor, his name will disappear from his chair. That way, we will know who has behaved well. No one shall stain the honor of the Round Table."

Sir Gawain spoke up. "How do we know how a knight should behave? All we know is how to fight in battle."

Arthur said, "In a peaceful society, people live by laws. In the next few years, I will try to make good laws for my people."

Then Sir Gareth spoke up. "But this is wild country, my lord. Outlaws make the roads dangerous. Beasts and dragons fill the woods. There is also a great deal of evil magic loose."

"This is true," said Arthur. "But it is time to bring peace to Britain. All of you knights must help me. I depend upon you to set a good example. That's why I have some special rules for you."

"Never commit murder. Never be a traitor. Never be cruel. Always help the weak. Always keep your word. Always fight on the side of right and justice."

The knights repeated this vow. They agreed to repeat the vow together every year at Easter. Each man sat tall, proud to be a knight at the Round Table.

Merlin's Warning

Soon all of Britain heard about the Round Table and Arthur's court at Camelot. Poets, musicians, and artists went to live in Arthur's castle. It became a center of culture.

Arthur knew he needed a queen to help him hold court, and he knew who this queen should be. Her name was Guinevere. She was the beautiful daughter of King Leograunce. The first time Arthur saw her, he had fallen in love.

Guinevere gladly agreed to marry King Arthur. The wedding was held at Camelot. The court celebrated with a three-day feast. Everyone admired the new Queen, except for Merlin.

At the feast, Merlin sat beside Arthur's half-sister, Morgana LeFay. Morgana wanted to be a wizard like Merlin. He had been teaching her about magic.

"Guinevere is certainly beautiful," Morgana said to Merlin.

Merlin frowned. "She is lovely," he said. "But her beauty will bring about the ruin of this court. Arthur wouldn't listen to me, though. He's too much in love."

Morgana watched her half-brother closely. It was true: Arthur looked madly in love. Morgana's lips curled in a sneer. She secretly hated him and was jealous of his power. Now Merlin had given her a clue that would help her cause trouble.

Suddenly Merlin stood up. Everyone in the hall became quiet to hear the wizard's words.

"I must leave you now," he announced. "I must go away with the Lady of the Lake, the great magician of Avalon. I know that she will put me to sleep for hundreds of years. I have seen this in my future. I can do nothing to change it. Besides, I love the Lady of the Lake — as much as Arthur loves Guinevere."

Arthur jumped up. "You cannot leave

us now!" he cried. "The hardest part is just beginning. It was easy to win battles. But now we are creating a new way of life. I need your help."

"You don't need my help to be a good king," Merlin said. "To be a good king, you must be a good man. You already are that."

"But we must teach people to live by right, not by might," said Arthur.

"My magic cannot help you there," said Merlin, "Just remember one thing, all of you. You will all die someday. But the story of the Round Table will be told forever. Now, farewell."

"Don't go, Merlin!" Arthur cried. "I don't want to lose you!"

"It is my fate," Merlin said, going out the door. "Now you must prove that you can stand on your own." Then he was gone.

While the feast went on, Arthur sat quietly. Guinevere tried to cheer him up. He smiled when he looked into her beautiful eyes. But he felt lost and lonely without Merlin.

From across the hall, Morgana LeFay watched her half-brother. As long as Merlin had been around, Morgana had behaved herself. But now maybe she could make Arthur suffer.

Two New Knights

There were still a few empty chairs at the Round Table. Young men came from all over Britain, hoping to win a chair.

One year at the Easter feast, Lady

Nimue walked into the hall. She was a magician and an old friend of Merlin's. She led in a handsome young squire, who was dressed in white. Queen Guinevere felt her heart skip a beat as she watched the young man kneel before Arthur.

"I bring a new knight to you, my lord," Lady Nimue said to King Arthur. "His name is Lancelot. He is the son of King Ban, but he was raised by the Lady of the Lake. She brought him up to be the greatest knight of the Round Table."

Lady Nimue pointed to one of the empty chairs at the Round Table. The name Lancelot appeared there in gold. Arthur smiled and raised his sword, Excalibur. He touched Lancelot on each shoulder with the sword.

"Rise, Sir Lancelot," he said. "You are now a knight of the Round Table."

As Lancelot rose, he saw Queen Guinevere. She was staring at him and blushing. He could not take his eyes away from her.

"This is my wife, Queen Guinevere," Arthur said proudly.

"I knew she must be the Queen," Lancelot said. "I heard that she is the most beautiful woman in Britain. Now that I have seen you, my lady, I must agree."

Queen Guinevere tried to appear calm. "Welcome to Camelot, Sir Lancelot," she said. Inside she was trembling.

Just then, Morgana LeFay entered the hall. She was leading a young squire, too. This one looked mean. Instead of wearing white, he was dressed in blood red. This was Mordred, Morgana's son.

"Brother Arthur," Morgana said, "I bring you a new knight. This is Mordred,

your nephew. Surely you won't refuse to make him a knight."

Arthur felt uneasy. He had a feeling that some great evil had entered his court. But he felt he must be loyal to his half-sister's son. So he made Mordred a knight, too.

Mordred's name appeared in gold on a chair. He and Lancelot both took their places at the Round Table.

A Rumor

Even without a war, the knights were busy. There were robbers, monsters, cruel landlords, and evil magicians all over the land. There were many poor people who needed help from Camelot. So the knights were often away, fighting against evil.

The knights became heroes to the British people. Sir Gawain, Sir Tristram, Sir Percival, and Sir Galahad were famous. But the most famous knight of all was Sir Lancelot.

Of all the knights, Lancelot was away from Camelot the most. Whenever he stopped at the castle, he did not stay long.

This hurt Arthur's feelings. He thought that Lancelot was his best friend. He did not know that Lancelot had a good reason for staying away from Camelot.

Lancelot had fallen in love with Queen Guinevere the moment he first saw her. He could tell from her eyes that she loved him, too. But they both loved King Arthur, and they did not want to hurt him.

They never talked to each other about this powerful love. In fact, they avoided each other as much as they could.

Seven years passed. There was little crime left in Britain, thanks to the members of the Round Table. People had learned to settle disagreements through law rather than violence.

There wasn't much for the knights to do anymore. They began to spend most of their time at Camelot. Even Lancelot had a hard time finding reasons to stay away.

Now the knights had more time to gossip and to be jealous of one another. It was a perfect situation for a troublemaker like Mordred, whose mother had taught him to hate Arthur.

One day, Mordred sat drinking with Sir Agravain, Gawain's brother. Agravain was a weak knight, and he was jealous of the heroic knights like Gawain and Lancelot. Mordred knew this.

"Have you noticed Lancelot and Guinevere lately?" Mordred asked.

Agravain shrugged. "No. What is there to notice?"

"They keep looking at each other when Arthur's back is turned," Mordred said. "Something is going on between them."

"I wouldn't be surprised," Agravain said. "It would be just like Lancelot to flirt with Arthur's wife. He thinks he's better than the rest of us."

Mordred smiled. He knew that Agravain had a big mouth. Soon the rumor would be all over Camelot.

When Gawain heard the rumor, he spoke to Arthur. "You and I know that Guinevere is loyal to you," Gawain said. "We also trust Lancelot completely. But these rumors could become dangerous. The knights are getting restless."

Arthur frowned, remembering Merlin's warning to him about Guinevere. "I wish that Merlin were here," he said. "I need his advice."

"That reminds me," Gawain said. "A strange thing happened to me yesterday, while I was out riding. I stopped to give my horse a drink of water. Then I saw a puff of smoke, and I heard Merlin's voice. It told me to tell you that your knights should search for the Holy Grail."

"The Holy Grail is a very magical cup," Arthur said. "It has been lost for years. Only someone with a perfectly pure heart can see the Holy Grail. If one of our knights could see it, that would bring great honor to the Round Table."

"It would be a very difficult search," Gawain said.

"Good," said Arthur. "Our knights need a new challenge. I hope that Merlin sends us a sign."

The Holy Grail

The sign came at the next Easter feast.

Arthur and his knights were seated at the Round Table. Arthur looked around proudly.

"This is the finest group of men who ever sat at one table," he told them. "This is Britain's brightest hour."

Suddenly, a great wind shook the castle. There was a mighty crash of thunder. Then a brilliant sunbeam shone through a window.

The knights saw a shining cup floating through the air. It was a vision of the

Holy Grail, covered with a veil of white silk. It passed down the length of the hall and then disappeared.

Sir Gawain jumped to his feet. "This is a sign from Merlin," he said. He put his hand upon his sword. "I swear by my sword that I will search for the Holy Grail. I will go anywhere and face any danger to find it."

Many other knights stood up, too. They also promised to search for the Grail.

King Arthur sat still and sighed. "I will be proud if one of you finds the Holy Grail. Yet I am sad to see you leave on this search. Many of you will die far from Camelot. We will never be together like this again."

For seven years, King Arthur's knights searched for the Holy Grail. A strong magic kept the Grail hidden. Many knights died while trying to find it. Others finally gave up the search.

Sir Lancelot and Sir Gawain learned that the Grail was at Castle Carbonek. They rode for months until they found the castle, hidden deep in a dark forest.

They went inside to the secret chapel where the Grail was kept. The door to the chapel opened by itself. A brilliant light streamed out and made Lancelot faint.

A voice from the air said, "Sir Lancelot, you are not worthy to see the Holy Grail."

Sir Gawain thought he saw the Holy Grail for a second through the doorway. He started toward it. But the chapel door swung shut, and he could not open it.

Sir Lancelot and Sir Gawain rode sadly away from Castle Carbonek. They had no choice but to return to Camelot.

Later, word reached Camelot that Sir

Galahad had found the Holy Grail. Galahad was the purest of all the knights. He had never done a bad deed or had a bad thought. That was why he was able to see the Grail. But after seeing it, he died. It was as though he had no more reason to live.

Trouble

King Arthur's knights slowly returned to Camelot. Things were different now. There were many empty seats around the Round Table. And Mordred was stirring up more trouble than ever.

Late one night, Morgana LeFay visited her son. "I have a plan for getting Arthur," she told him. "You must catch Lancelot and Guinevere together," she said. "Then you can accuse them of being traitors to the King. Arthur could not ignore that because he has to uphold his laws. He would have to punish them, and that would break his heart."

Mordred grinned and said, "I'll get Agravain to help."

A few days later, Queen Guinevere was walking in the garden. She saw Lancelot sitting by a rose bush, deep in thought. Usually she would have walked the other way. But Lancelot looked so sad that she couldn't help speaking to him.

"What is the matter?" she asked. "You've been so quiet lately."

"I am very tired," he said. "For years I've been trying to be a good knight. But when I searched for the Grail, I was not

able to see it. A voice told me I was not worthy."

"Not worthy?" Guinevere asked.

"It's true. I have one wrong feeling in my heart. I haven't been strong enough to get rid of it. I am in love with you, my lady. I have loved you since the day we met."

Guinevere turned pale. She whispered, "And I love you. I have fought against it for years."

They stared at each other, trembling. "But we cannot hurt Arthur," Lancelot said. "Maybe I should go away for good."

Just then, Mordred and Agravain jumped out from some bushes. They were followed by four other knights.

"We heard everything!" Mordred shouted. "You were plotting against the King! You are traitors, and you must die!"

Lancelot pulled out his sword. The six knights were no match for him. He killed Sir Agravain and wounded two others. Then he climbed over the garden wall and left Camelot. "I'll get him yet," muttered Mordred. Then he pointed his sword at Guinevere and ordered her inside.

Mordred took Guinevere to King Arthur. He told the King what he had heard. Arthur tried not to listen, but his knights began to argue with him.

"The laws must apply to everyone," said Sir Gawain. "You say traitors must die. Guinevere is a traitor, so she must die."

Arthur looked sadly at his wife. She turned her face away, ashamed. Arthur felt his heart sink.

"I cannot change the law," he said.

"Law is the basis of our peace and civilization. Not even the King can go against it."

"She must die at the stake!" shouted Mordred.

War

The next morning, firewood was piled high in the courtyard. Guinevere was led out and tied to a stake at the center of the pile. The firewood was lit, and the flames crept toward her.

Suddenly the crowd heard hoofbeats approaching. Lancelot, riding a white horse, burst into the courtyard. He swept Guinevere away from the flames and rode off with her.

Sir Gawain ran to Arthur, his face red with anger. "Lancelot has broken your law again!" he said.

"But a knight should save his Queen from danger," Arthur said. "Lancelot had to do this."

"Lancelot killed my brother Agravain," Gawain said. "He has betrayed you, and he has broken the law. He must be punished, my lord."

Arthur sighed and said, "You are right. We must declare war against Lancelot."

Half of the knights of the Round Table fought with Arthur and Gawain. But the others left to join Sir Lancelot. Knights who had been friends were now enemies.

Arthur's army followed Lancelot over to France. While he was gone, he left his nephew, Mordred, in charge of the kingdom. Arthur thought he would not be

gone for long. But the war dragged on for months and months.

One day Arthur and Gawain were fighting side by side. Suddenly, Lancelot appeared with his sword raised. He began to swing it at Arthur. When he recognized who it was, he dropped his sword.

Gawain shouted, "Why don't you fight, you traitor?"

Lancelot shook his head. "I could not hurt my King," Then he knelt before Arthur. "I have never been a traitor to you, my lord. Can't you forgive me and end this foolish war?"

"Let us go to my tent," Arthur said.

Arthur, Gawain, and Lancelot sat up all night talking. By dawn, they had made peace.

"I must get back to Britain," Arthur said. "Mordred has been causing trouble. He raised everyone's taxes, just to make himself rich. He tried to put Guinevere in prison. He says he will fight me if I go back. I must not lose my kingdom."

Lancelot said, "Mordred has been behind all of this. He was the one who made you think I was a traitor."

Arthur looked closely at his friend. "But you still love Guinevere, don't you?" he asked.

Lancelot sighed. "I cannot help that, my lord. But that does not mean I cannot be your loyal friend. You will need help in fighting Mordred. I will follow you to Britain soon and help you win back your kingdom."

So Arthur and his army sailed back to Britain. Mordred heard they were coming and sent out an army to fight them.

The Final Battle

The night before the battle, Arthur dreamed he saw Merlin. Merlin said, "Do not fight Mordred tomorrow. Make a truce with him for one month. By then, Lancelot will be here to help you."

The next morning, Arthur's army was ready to enter battle. But Arthur rode out first, to make a truce with Mordred.

As he set out, Gawain said, "Be careful, my lord."

"I cannot trust Mordred," Arthur said. "Watch us as we talk. If you see any of his men pull a sword, give the order to fight."

Arthur and Mordred met each other in the middle of a plain. They agreed to sign a truce.

As they were signing, a snake slid out of some bushes. It bit one of Mordred's men on the heel. The man pulled out his sword to kill the snake.

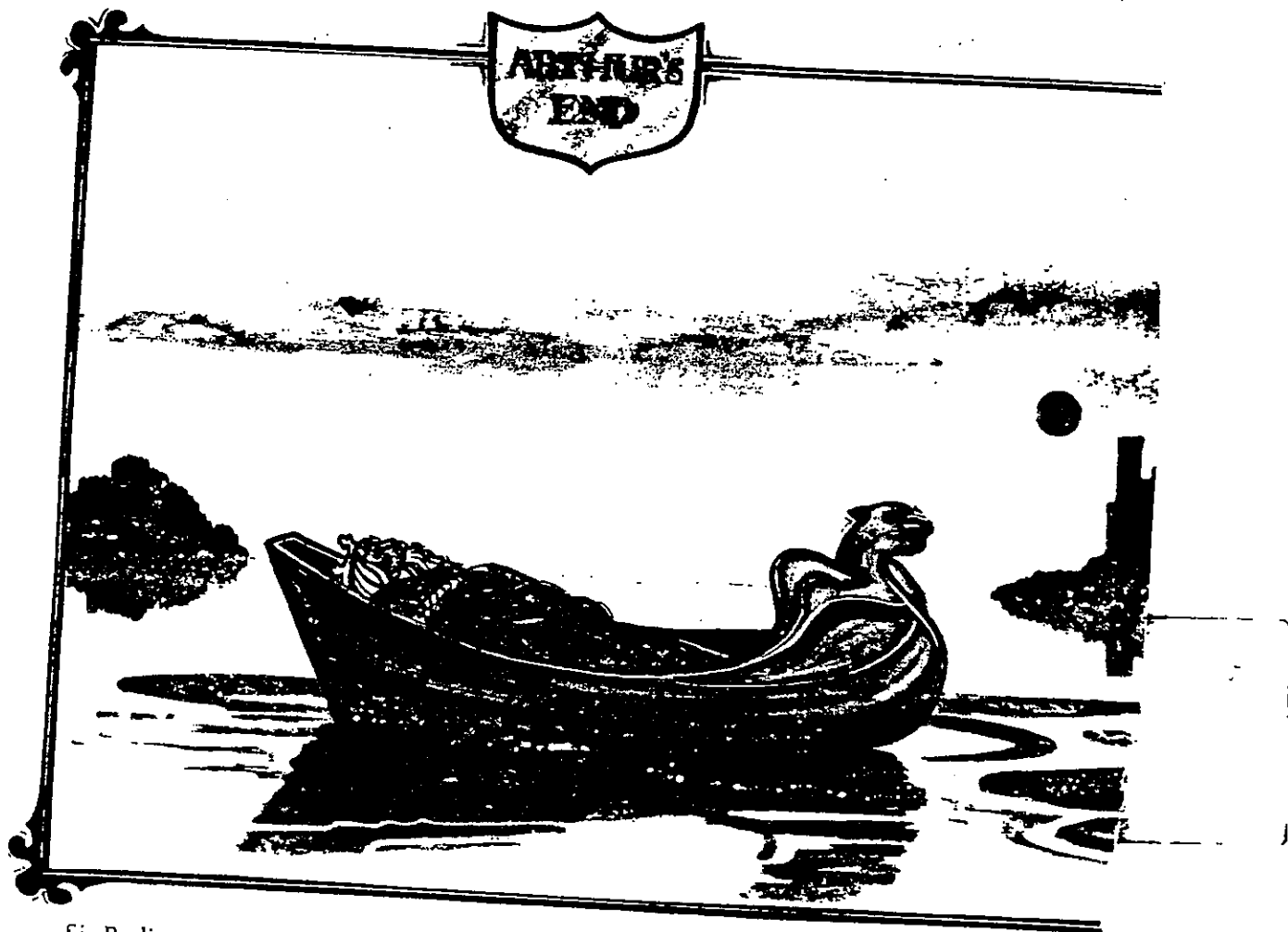
Gawain saw the flash of the sword. He shouted to Arthur's men to attack. Mordred's men eagerly started fighting, too.

By evening, the plain was covered with bodies. The grass was stained with blood. All of the best knights of the Round Table lay dead. Mordred's army had met the same fate.

King Arthur looked around him sadly. He said to the young knight beside him, "The end has truly come."

Then he saw Mordred leaning on his sword among the dead men. "There is the traitor who brought this about," Arthur said. "Give me my spear quickly, Sir Bedivere."





Sir Bedivere said, "Leave him alone, my lord. His mother's magic may be protecting him. Besides, he has lost. There are two of us left and only one of him."

"I must kill him," Arthur said. "He destroyed my kingdom."

Arthur took his spear. He ran toward Mordred shouting, "Death to you, you traitor!"

Arthur's spear ran through Mordred's body. But with his last breath, Mordred struck Arthur's head with his sword.

Arthur fell to the ground. Sir Bedivere ran to him and picked him up. He carried

Arthur to a nearby lake. The water was red in the setting sun.

Arthur whispered, "Take Excalibur. Throw it into the water."

Sir Bedivere took the sword to the edge of the lake. It was a beautiful sword. He hated to throw it away. But the King had told him to do this. So he hurled the sword into the lake.

As the sword flashed in the sunset, a hand and an arm rose out of the lake. It was the arm of a woman, and her hand caught the sword by the handle. Then it disappeared into the water.



Sir Bedivere ran to tell King Arthur what had happened. But he couldn't find the King.

Sir Bedivere looked back at the water. Then he saw King Arthur lying on a white boat, floating slowly away on the lake.

"My lord!" shouted Sir Bedivere. "Please don't leave!"

He heard the King's voice floating to him over the water. "I must go now to Avalon. Merlin is waiting for me there. You shall go back to tell our story. Tell everyone about Camelot, the Round Table, and the peace we brought to Britain."

Then the boat drifted into the evening mist and disappeared with the setting sun.

A month after the final battle, Lancelot returned to Britain. He went to speak to Guinevere, who was now living in a convent.

She told Lancelot about Arthur's end. Then she said, "That is why I am living in this convent. None of this would have happened if it hadn't been for me."

Lancelot shook his head and took her hand. "Arthur had forgiven us," he told her. "He knew we loved him. It was Mordred's fault."

He paused, then added, "The age of Camelot is over. But Britain must go on, even without Arthur. Maybe we have learned something about how to live in a civilized world. I believe that much of Camelot will always be with us."

READING COMPREHENSION

Summarizing. Choose the best phrase to complete each sentence. Then write the complete statements on your paper.

1. In the year 500, Britain needed a leader to _____ (invade Germany, drive magic out of the land, unite the country and drive out the Saxons).
2. King Arthur's first task was to prove that he was a good _____ (lawmaker, military leader, magician).
3. When peace came, Arthur knew he must teach his people to live by _____ (right, might, magic).

Questions on "The Legend of King Arthur"

1. Characterize King Arthur.
2. How does Arthur become King? How is this in keeping with the Medieval zeitgeist?
3. Characterize the Knights of the Round Table. What acts of chivalry do they fulfill?
4. Describe the relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere. How does it go against the Great Chain of Being? What happens to them as a result?
5. What is the role of God/religion/the Church in this story? How has it changed from the Classical Era?
6. How is the zeitgeist of the Medieval Era reflected in this piece?

