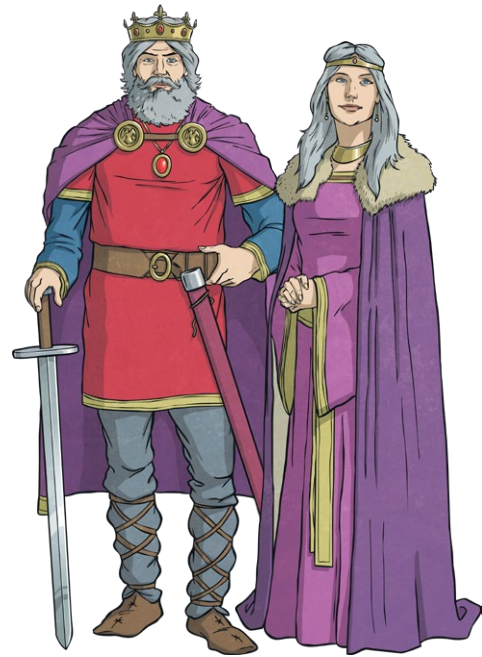


The Legend of King Arthur

Many hundreds of years ago, King Uther of the Britons fell in love with Lady Igraine. They had a son and named him Arthur. Because of the many wars with the Saxons, Uther gave his son to Merlin so that he could be raised in safety. Merlin took the baby and gave him to Sir Ector, who raised him in the safety of the countryside with his own son, Kay.



Many years later, King Uther died. Nobody knew he had a son as it had remained a closely guarded secret. Therefore, there was much arguing about who should be the next High King of the Britons.

Around this time, a mysterious stone appeared outside St Paul's Cathedral in London. An enormous sword was protruding out of the stone with a message on it which said that whoever pulled the sword out of the stone was the rightful High King of the Britons.

Lots of knights and local kings tried to pull the sword from the stone but to no avail. The sword would not move and there was no High King of the Britons for many years.



When Arthur was fifteen years old he travelled to a tournament where his stepbrother Kay was competing. Unfortunately, Arthur had forgotten to bring Kay's sword so he set off to find one before his mistake was discovered.

He came to St. Paul's Cathedral and saw the sword in the stone. He approached the stone and pulled the sword out easily! When he returned to the tournament, no one believed that he had pulled the sword from the stone. Arthur returned to the stone and showed everyone how he had pulled the sword out.

Soon after, Arthur was crowned High King of Britain. Merlin, his father's old wizard, became his advisor and close friend.

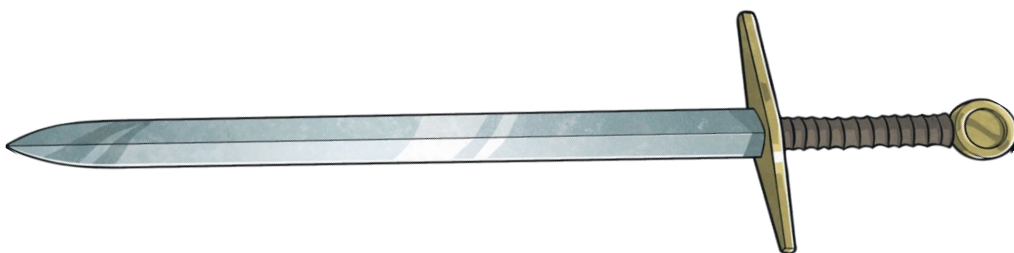
At this time, the Saxons were still battling against the Britons. Merlin decided to take Arthur to see the Lady of the Lake. The Lady of the Lake emerged from the lake and gave Arthur a sword named 'Excalibur', which he kept in a magical scabbard. With the help of Excalibur, and his trusted knights, Arthur defeated many Saxons and Britain became a peaceful land.

Arthur settled his royal court at Camelot and shortly after, married Guinevere, the beautiful daughter of King Leodegrance.

To celebrate the wedding, King Leodegrance gave Arthur and Guinevere a large round table, which Arthur used to meet with his bravest and most-trusted knights. These knights were known as 'Knights of the Round Table'.

The knights had many adventures: they fought dragons, rescued damsels in distress and some even searched for the 'Holy Grail'; the cup that Jesus was said to have used during the Last Supper.

The bravest knight of all was Sir Lancelot. Sir Lancelot and Guinevere fell in love and would meet secretly, away from the palace. When Arthur discovered this, Sir Lancelot and Guinevere fled to Brittany. Arthur pursued them, leaving Mordred in charge of his kingdom while he was gone. Arthur found and killed Sir Lancelot and sent Guinevere to a nunnery.



While Arthur was away, Mordred proclaimed himself High King and built his own army. Upon his return, Arthur's army battled with Mordred's. Arthur finally killed Mordred with his sword, Excalibur.

Unfortunately, Arthur himself was mortally wounded and he knew he would die very soon. Therefore, he gave Excalibur to his knight, Sir Bedivere, and ordered him to return it to the Lady in the Lake.

Sir Bedivere could not bear to throw Excalibur into the lake so he hid it instead. When he returned to Arthur, he told him he had thrown it into the lake. Arthur did not believe him and instructed him to restore Excalibur to the lake. As he threw Excalibur, he was astonished to see a hand emerge from the water to catch the sword. It was the hand of the Lady of the Lake.

When he returned to Arthur, he told him what he had seen. Arthur rest assured then that Excalibur had been returned to the Lady of the Lake.

Arthur was laid in a boat on the lake which sailed away to the isle of Avalon, where he died. His body was never recovered. According to legend, he is awaiting the call of the Britons, ready to return in their time of greatest need.

