

The Sword in the Stone

In olden times, so the legend tells us, King Uther Pendragon died and whoever was to be the next King of England had to pass a test. The knight who could pull the sword from the stone would be the rightful King of England. The bravest knights in the land assembled to try their luck.

The Knights gathered around the huge block of stone. Thrust into the stone was a huge sword. Written on the sword were these words:

He who pulls this sword out of this stone, is the true King of England.

All the knights, one after another, stepped up to the stone. They grasped the sword and pulled, and pulled, and pulled! But no one was able to pull the sword from the stone.

'The one who is to be our new King is not here,' said the Archbishop. 'But I am sure he will come. Let us appoint ten knights to guard the sword and on New Year's Day we will meet here again to see if our new King shows himself.' Everyone agreed that ten knights should stand guard over the sword.

On New Year's Day, knights came from all over the land to see if they could pull the sword from the stone. Among them were Sir Ector, his son Sir Kay and Arthur. Arthur was Sir Ector's adopted son and squire to Sir Kay.

They were nearly at the meeting place when Sir Kay exclaimed, 'I have left my sword behind!' No knight should ever be without his sword! 'Arthur,' said Sir Kay, 'would you go back to the lodgings to get my sword?'

'Of course,' replied Arthur. 'I will go straight away. You go on and I'll catch you up as soon as I can.'

Arthur rode quickly back to the lodgings. The door was locked. He banged on the door but there was no answer. Everyone had gone to the meeting

place to see who could pull the sword from the stone. *I know where I can get a sword,* Arthur thought to himself.

He rode swiftly to the meeting place. It was deserted as everyone had gathered to watch the knights jousting nearby. Arthur dismounted, walked quickly to the huge stone and, without effort, pulled out the sword. He got back on his horse and galloped to find his father and Sir Kay.

Sir Kay was delighted to have his sword but it felt odd in his hand. He ran his eye down the sword and realised that this was not his sword. It was the sword from the stone! Arthur had brought him the sword from the stone! Sir Kay found Sir Ector and showed him the sword. 'Surely I am the true King of England as I have the sword from the stone,' he said, confidently.

Sir Ector was puzzled. He directed Sir Kay and Arthur to the stone and asked Sir Kay, 'Show me how you got this sword, then.'

Sir Kay's face fell but he answered honestly, 'Arthur brought me the sword.'

Sir Ector turned to Arthur. 'Did you pull the sword from the stone?' Arthur told his father that he had gone back to the lodgings but he couldn't get in to get Sir Kay's sword. He knew where there was a sword so he went and got it.

'Did nobody try to stop you?' asked Sir Ector.

'No,' answered Arthur. 'Everyone was at the jousting.'

'Well,' said Sir Ector, 'you are the rightful King of England.'

Retold by Wendy Wren

