


Sir Thomas Malory's
TALES OF KING ARTHUR
Edited and abridged with an introduction by
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Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	6
NOTE ON THE TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS	7
INTRODUCTION	9
TALES OF KING ARTHUR	
BOOK 1	<i>The Birth of Arthur</i> 29
BOOK 2	<i>Arthur becomes King</i> 34
BOOK 3	<i>Excalibur</i> 46
BOOK 4	<i>Guenever</i> 48
BOOK 5	<i>The Death of Merlin</i> 52
BOOK 6	<i>Morgan le Fay</i> 56
BOOK 7	<i>The Expedition to Rome</i> 67
BOOK 8	<i>Lancelot</i> 81
BOOK 9	<i>Tristram</i> 90
BOOK 10	<i>Lancelot and Elaine</i> 150
BOOK 11	<i>The Grail</i> 173
BOOK 12	<i>Lancelot and Guenever</i> 237
BOOK 13	<i>The Death of Arthur</i> 288
INDEX	348

BOOK 3
EXCALIBUR

Then the king and Merlin departed.

 AND AS THEY RODE, King Arthur said, "I have no sword." "No force," said Merlin, "hereby is a sword that shall be yours, and I may." So they rode till they came to a lake, the wiche was a fair water, and broad. And in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a fair sword in that hand.

"Lo!" said Merlin, "yonder is that sword that I spake of." With that they saw a damsel going upon the lake. "What damsel is that?" said Arthur. "That is the Lady of the Lake," said Merlin; "and within that lake is a rock, and therein is as fair a place as any on earth, and richly beseen; and this damsel will come to you anon, and then speak ye fair to her that she may give you that sword."

So anon came the damsel unto Arthur, and saluted him, and he her again. "Damsel," said Arthur, "what sword is that yonder, that the arm holdeth above the water? I would it were mine, for I have no sword." "Sir Arthur, king," said the damsel, "that sword is mine, and if ye will give me a gift when I ask it you, ye shall have it." "By my faith," said Arthur, "I will give you what gift ye will ask." "Well!" said the damsel, "Go ye into yonder barge, and row yourself to the sword, and take it and the scabbard with you. And I will ask my gift when I see my time."

So king Arthur and Merlin alit and tied their horses to two trees, and so they went into the barge, and when they came to the sword that the hand held, then King Arthur took it up by the handles, and took it with him, and the arm and the hand went under the water.

Then King Arthur looked on the sword, and liked it passing well. "Wheter like you better," said Merlin, "the sword or the scabbard?" "I like better the sword," said Arthur. "Ye are the more unwise," said Merlin, "for the scabbard is worth ten of the swords, for whiles ye

have the scabbard upon you, ye shall lose no blood be ye never so sore wounded. Therefore keep well the scabbard always with you.”

So they came unto Caerleon, whereof his knights were passing glad. And when they heard of his adventures, they marvelled that he would jeopard his person so, alone. But all men of worship said it was merry to be under such a chieftan, that would put his person in adventure as other poor knights did.

Then king Arthur let send for all the children born on Mayday, begotten of lords and born of ladies; for Merlin told King Arthur That he that should destroy him should be born on Mayday. Wherefore he sent for them all, upon pain of death; and so there were found many lords’ sons, and many knights’ sons, and all were sent unto the king. And so was Mordred sent by King Lot’s wife. And all were put in a ship to the sea, and some were four weeks old, and some less.

And so by fortune the ship drove unto a castle, and was all toriven, and destroyed the most part save that Mordred was cast up, and a good man found him, and fostered him till he was fourteen year old, and then he brought him to the court, as it rehearseth afterward, toward the end of ”The Death of Arthur”.

So many lords and barons of this realm were displeased, for their children were so lost, and many put the wite on Merlin more than on Arthur; so what for dread and for love, they held their peace.

King Arthur is among the most famous literary characters of all time. The Arthurian legend of the Knights of the Round Table, Camelot, the Quest for the... The phrase Arthurian Legend encompasses a number of different versions of the tale but, in the present day, mainly refers to the English work of Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur* (Death of Arthur) published by William Caxton in 1485 CE. The legend developed from History of The Kings of Britain, passing over to France, to Germany, to Spain and Portugal, and back to England with numerous additions and versions proliferating, until Malory compiled, edited, revised, and rewrote a prose version in 1469 CE while he was in prison. *King Arthur & the Lady of the Lake*. by Walter Crane (Public Dom Arthur was the first born son of King Uther Pendragon and heir to the throne. However these were very troubled times and Merlin, a wise magician, advised that the baby Arthur should be raised in a secret place and that none should know his true identity. As Merlin feared, when King Uther died there was great conflict over who should be the next king. Merlin used his magic to set a sword in a stone. Written on the sword, in letters of gold, were these words: "Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone is the rightwise born king of all England." Of course all the contenders for the thr