

HOWARD PYLE

KING ARTHUR
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with
NEW ACTIVITIES

HOWARD PYLE

THE MAN BEHIND THE LEGEND



Excalibur

In Pyle's version of the story, Arthur receives the magical sword Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake, while in other versions, Excalibur is the sword that Arthur takes out of the stone.

The book you are about to read by Howard Pyle is one of many books that tell the story of King Arthur - one of the most popular kings in literature. However, Pyle's version of the legend is the most popular. Let's see why...

The Story

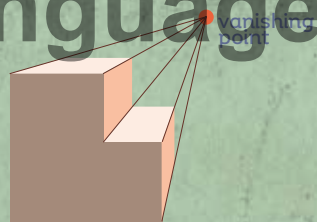
Pyle tells the story of Arthur from his birth to his death. He introduces us to a lot of famous characters such as *Merlin*, *Lancelot* and *Guinevere*. His story is full of adventure and he uses his imagination to add new detail and excitement. Yet his fascination with adventures is just one reason for the success of Pyle's version. More than the stories, it is the beauty of Pyle's illustrations that captures and stimulates the imagination of the readers. Influenced by the German painter *Albrecht Dürer*, Pyle gives visible form to the special atmosphere of that glorious age of adventure, bravery and honour.

The Illustrations

What makes Pyle's drawings so special? The first thing is the *dynamic perspective* used by the illustrator. It really makes readers feel like they are taking part in the scene. The second is the amazing *details* in the images. The clothes of the king and his knights, the *tapestries* hanging on the walls of Arthur's castle, all the castles in the background in many scenes, are incredibly rich in details.

Perspective

Perspective drawings make scenes more realistic as they appear to get smaller as they get further away. All the lines in the drawing meet in one or two vanishing points.



The fascination with King Arthur and his legends is still strong today. His story is loved all over the world and still inspires artists, illustrators and moviemakers. There are many examples of the influence of Pyle's illustrations in the creation of popular characters.

GLOSSARY

- **captures:** catches
- **characters:** people in a story
- **dynamic:** full of life; moving
- **fascination:** interest
- **introduces:** (here) tells for the first time
- **popular:** liked
- **stimulates:** makes interesting
- **tapestries:** cloth paintings
- **visible:** that you can see

King Arthur

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Lady Guinevere

King Arthur

Uther Pendragon

Merlin



Morgana



Vivien



Nymue



Sir Lancelot

Lady Elaine


Sir Galahad



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1 King Uther Pendragon

 King Uther Pendragon is a strong and wise king. He is king of all of Britain, but he is not alone.

Two men stand next to him. The first is Merlin, a great sorcerer. The second is Sir Ulfius, a great knight. Sir Ulfius uses a sword to fight battles; Merlin uses magic to fight evil.

Many years pass, and Uther Pendragon marries the beautiful Lady Igraine. Lady Igraine's first husband is dead. She has two daughters. One of her daughters is Margaise. The other is Morgana Le Fay, a sorceress. Uther Pendragon does not know it, but Morgana Le Fay has a black heart.

Soon, Uther Pendragon and Lady Igraine have a son. The child is strong. And the king is pleased. Uther Pendragon and Merlin visit the baby boy. The king smiles at the sleeping child. Then he looks at Merlin. Merlin's hair is long and his beard is grey. His green eyes can see the future. Merlin is not smiling.

'What is wrong?' asks Uther Pendragon.

'We are living in dangerous times,' says Merlin. 'I see death.'

'What do you see? Tell me,' says the king.

'I see sickness and I see your death. I also see your enemies. They are coming here. They want to kill your son,' Merlin answers.

GLOSSARY

- **battles:** fighting between two big groups
- **dangerous:** when something can hurt or kill you
- **enemies:** people that you are fighting against
- **evil:** something very bad
- **sickness:** illness
- **wise:** knowing the right thing to do

Uther Pendragon's heart is heavy. Merlin is never wrong.
'What can I do?' the king asks. 'How can I save my son?'
'Give the boy to me,' says Merlin.

Uther Pendragon has no choice. That night, under a dark sky, he gives his baby son to Merlin. Merlin takes the child to a secret place.

Uther Pendragon never sees his son again. The king is soon dead and his people are full of sadness. But when Uther Pendragon's enemies come to his castle, they cannot find his son. No one knows about Merlin's secret place.

The baby boy is safe.



Eighteen years pass. Evil men make Britain a sad and dangerous place.

Then one day, the Archbishop• calls Merlin to his cathedral•.

‘The kingdom• is sick,’ says the Archbishop. ‘You are wise, Merlin. Help us. Find us a king.’

Merlin looks at the Archbishop and smiles. ‘There is one true king. He is alive• and well – and he is Uther Pendragon’s son.’

The Archbishop is amazed•. ‘Where is he?’ he asks. ‘How can we find him? How can we find the true king? How can we find Uther Pendragon’s son?’

Again, Merlin smiles. ‘I can find him,’ he says.

‘How?’ asks the Archbishop.

‘With the sword in the stone•,’ says Merlin.

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MAGIC

Merlin can do magic.

What other stories talk about magic?

☞ Tell a friend.

GLOSSARY

- **alive:** not dead
- **amazed:** surprised
- **Archbishop:** important priest
- **cathedral:** big church

- **kingdom:** a place with a king
- **secret:** no one knows about
- **stone:**





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2 The sword in the stone

2 The Archbishop does not understand. 'With the sword in the stone?' he says. 'What do you mean?' But Merlin does not answer. Without another word, he goes to the back of the cathedral.

The Archbishop follows• him. He is trying to understand the sorcerer's words. He sees a stone and a beautiful sword.

The sword is deep in the stone.

The Archbishop's eyes open wide. 'The sword in the stone,' he says. 'How?'

He looks at Merlin, but Merlin does not speak. The sword shines• like a light. It is like no other sword. It is silver and gold, with jewels•.

There are words on the sword – in shining gold letters. The Archbishop moves near and reads the words:

*'Take this sword from this stone
And be the true king of Britain.'*

'That's amazing!' says the Archbishop.

Merlin smiles. 'Now send a message to all the kings and knights of Britain,' he says. 'Tell them to come here at Christmas time. First they can fight in a tournament•. Then they can try to take the sword from the stone.'

The Archbishop agrees•. He sends his messengers• north, south, east and west. Soon every man, woman and child in the kingdom hears about the tournament. Everyone hears about the sword in the stone.

GLOSSARY

- **agrees:** thinks the same
- **follows:** goes after
- **jewels:** very precious stones
- **messengers:** people who take messages
- **shines:** gives off light
- **tournament:** series of contests or competitions

‘Who can win the tournament and take the sword from the stone?’ the people ask.

‘King Lot of Orkney can,’ say some.

‘King Leodegrance of Camiliard can,’ say others.

Everyone is talking about it.

Slowly, the days pass. And as Christmas comes near, so the kings and knights of Britain leave their homes. They fill the roads on their beautiful horses – hundreds and hundreds of them. They are all sure of one thing: ‘I, and only I, can win the tournament and take the sword from the stone.’

The Archbishop meets Merlin early on Christmas day. The air is cold and the sun is low in the sky. The kings and knights are getting ready to start the tournament. They are calling out to their servants• and putting on their armour•.

‘Who can take the sword from the stone?’ the Archbishop asks Merlin. ‘There are so many great men here.’

Merlin smiles. ‘Only the true king of Britain can!’ he says.

TOURNAMENT

A tournament is a competition – something that people try to win.

What competitions do you know?

Do you do any competitions?



Tell a friend.

GLOSSARY

• **armour:** metal clothes for battle

• **servants:** people who work and live with someone to help them

AFTER READING VOCABULARY

- 1**  Three words are related to each other, but one is not. Which one? Find the odd one out. Explain why to a partner.

| | | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|----------|---------|
| a | EVIL | SICKNESS | KINGDOM | MADNESS |
| b | ISLE | SHIELD | HELMET | ARMOUR |
| c | POTION | NYMUE | HERBS | WAND |
| d | BRAVE | GRASS | TRUE | WISE |
| e | DWARF | SERVANT | AVALON | MASTER |
| f | SECRET | PROMISE | RELATIVE | TRUST |
| g | CLOAK | VEIL | RIBBON | TABLE |
| h | TOURNAMENT | FEAST | JOURNEY | HEAVEN |
| i | THRONE | UTHER | KINGDOM | COURT |
| j | REST | KNIGHT | RELATIVE | ENEMY |

- 2** Now write down the initial letters of all the odd words in Exercise 1.

- 3** All the following sentences contain one mistake. Circle it and then write the correct sentences.

a King Arthur is not alone. Two men stands next to him.

.....

b Uther Pendragon does not know it, but Morgana has some black heart.

.....

c Merlin's hair are long and his beard is grey.

.....



d When Sir Lancelot's madness end, he leaves the forest.

.....

e Sir Galahad's soul leaves his body and goes up in heaven.

.....

f 'I see your death. I also see your enemies. They are going here. They want to kill your son.'

.....

g 'Take this sword from a stone and be the true king of Britain.'

.....

h In the middle of the lake, a silver hand is come out of the water.

.....

i 'There are two empty seats. One of that is the Seat Perilous.'

.....

4 Unscramble the words in the box with the help of their meaning.

a TLHMEE= hard hat that covers and protects the head

b KLAE = large area of water surrounded by land

c DOWSR = weapon with a long sharp blade and a handle

d LIVE = very bad or cruel

e NSIOPO = material that can kill you if you eat it or drink it

f EBVAR = with no fear, courageous

g HPAHORSICB = a very important priest in Christian religion

HOWARD PYLE

KING ARTHUR

Adapted by Scott Lauder & Walter McGregor

**“Take this sword from this stone.
And be the true king of Britain.”**

Britain is a sad and dangerous place.
The kingdom needs a true and good king.
One day Arthur comes to the cathedral and pulls the sword
from the stone. Only the true King of England can do this.
From that day Arthur becomes King Arthur.
Follow the adventures of King Arthur, Merlin, the Knights
of the Round Table, Lady Guinevere and Sir Lancelot and
decide for yourselves if you think the legend is real or not.

Recording in British English



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| | | 5 | B1 Threshold | PET | 5, 6 |

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ISBN: 978-3-99045-721-4



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