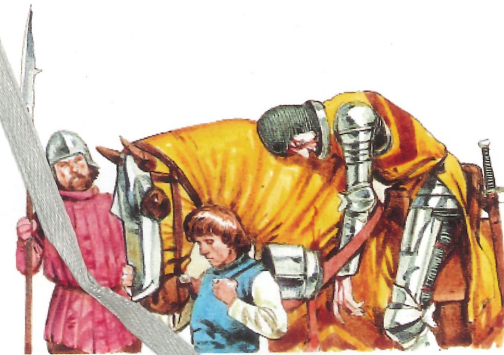




Chapter 2

The Lady of the Lake



Arthur ruled fairly and wisely,
giving help to anyone who asked.

One day, a young man arrived
at Camelot. He was very upset.
“My master was murdered by
another knight!” he cried.

Arthur listened carefully to the story. The murderer was a knight named Sir Pellinore, who had sworn to kill every knight passing through his forest.



"I shall fight Sir Pellinore myself," said Arthur and rode out the very next day.

On the way, he met Merlin. "You must turn back," the wizard told him. "Sir Pellinore is one of the strongest knights in the world."



"Turn back? Never!" declared Arthur. "I must save my people from this menace."

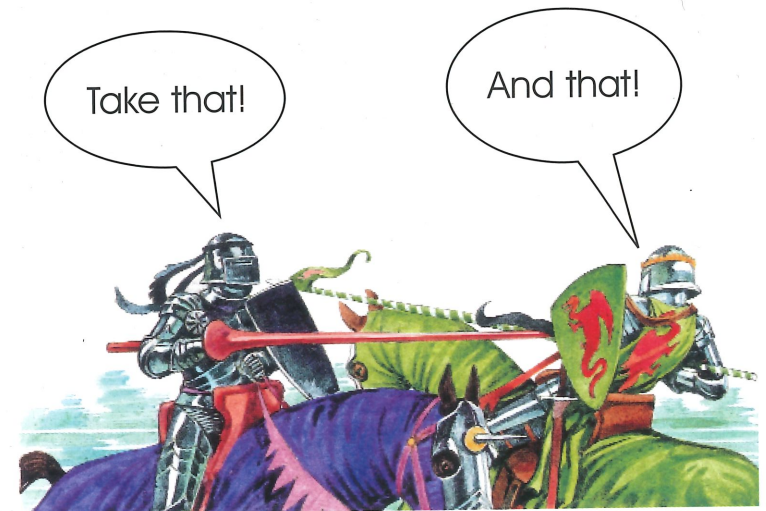
Merlin sighed. "If you insist," he said. "But I'm coming with you."

Suddenly, a knight appeared between the trees.



"Come any closer and I'll kill you!" cried the mighty knight.

"Just try it!" Arthur shouted in return. With a thunder of hooves, the two men rode at each other, gripping their lances.



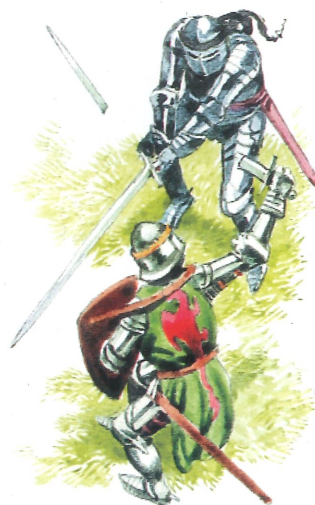
They hit each other so hard that their lances broke. A servant brought two more and they charged again. This time, Arthur was knocked from his horse.

Arthur clambered to his feet. "Come on!" he cried.

Are you brave enough to fight me with a sword?



Sir Pellinore jumped from his horse. The two men fought furiously. Then Sir Pellinore struck Arthur's sword with a massive blow and it broke in two.

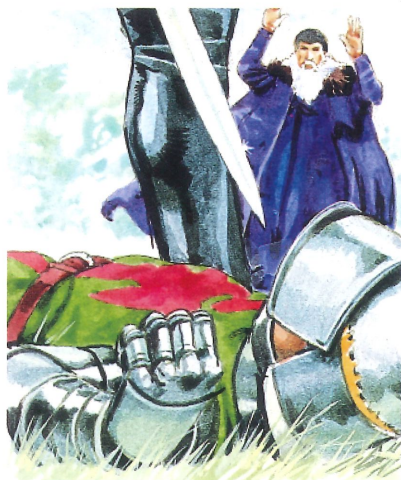


"Ha! I've got you now!" shouted Sir Pellinore. "Surrender or die!"

Instead, Arthur hurled himself at the knight and wrestled him to the ground.

I don't give up that easily!





But Sir Pellinore was stronger than Arthur and soon had pinned him down.

“No mercy this time!” he growled and raised his sword to chop off Arthur’s head. Then he heard a voice. It was Merlin.



Sir Pellinore, stop! You can’t kill the king!

“Oh, yes I can!” declared Sir Pellinore. “If he lives, he’ll never forgive me!”

As Pellinore spoke, Merlin cast a spell on the knight. Sir Pellinore slumped to the ground, snoring.



Sleep, brave knight and end your fight.

“He was brave, but dangerous,” Merlin said to Arthur. “Asleep, he can’t hurt anyone.”

Merlin took the wounded king to a hermit who lived nearby. The hermit tended Arthur's wounds and in a few days he was better.

But Arthur was worried. "Where am I going to get a new sword?" he asked Merlin.

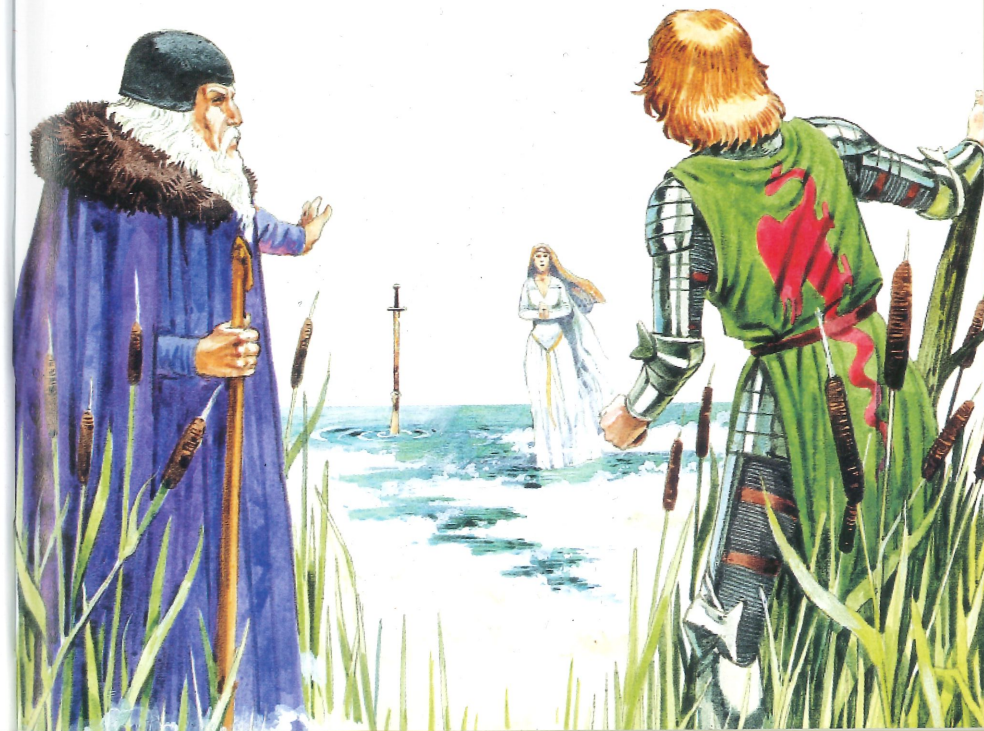
Don't worry.
We'll go to the Lake
of Avalon.



Merlin's plan meant a long journey. After many days, they reached the Lake of Avalon, where a strange sight rose before them.

"A hand... holding a sword," whispered Arthur. "But who is the beautiful lady on the water?"

"The Lady of the Lake," Merlin replied.



The lady walked across the water to Arthur and offered her hand.

"My Lady," he said, bowing low. "I am here to ask for the sword."

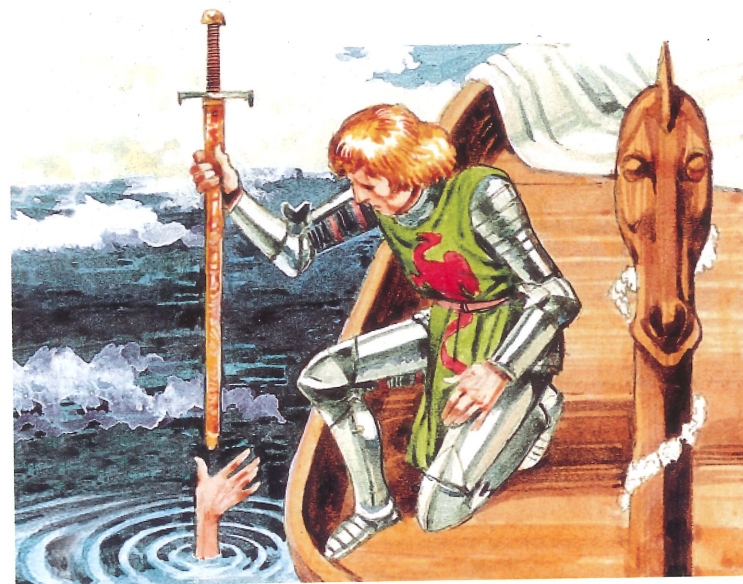
"You may fetch it yourself," she said, with a smile.

The sword's
name is
Excalibur.



The lady showed Arthur a little boat, hidden in the reeds. He stepped in and the boat glided to the hand.

Arthur reached out for the sword in its beautiful scabbard.



As he grasped it, the hand let go. Silently, it slid beneath the water and was gone.

When Arthur got back to shore,
the lady had vanished. He showed
Merlin the sword.

"It's wonderful!" Arthur
exclaimed.



"It is," said Merlin. "But the
scabbard is worth more. As long
as you wear it, you will not bleed...
however badly you are injured."

Arthur returned to Camelot and
settled down to rule once more.