

*Title*

# **In the Court of King Arthur**

**By**

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## ***About this eBook***

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### ***Introduction: Who was King Arthur?***

King Arthur, who held sway in Camelot with his Knights of the Round Table, was supposedly a king of Britain hundreds of years ago. Most of the stories about him are probably not historically true, but there was perhaps a real king named Arthur, or with a name very much like Arthur, who ruled somewhere in the island of Britain about the sixth century.

Among the romantic spires and towers of Camelot, King Arthur held court with his queen, Guinevere. According to tradition, he received mortal wounds in battling with the invading Saxons, and was carried magically to fairyland to be brought back to health and life. Excalibur was the name of King Arthur's sword - in fact, it was the name of two of his swords. One of these tremendous weapons Arthur pulled from the stone in which it was imbedded, after all other knights had failed. This showed that Arthur was the proper king. The other Excalibur was given to Arthur by the Lady of the Lake - she reached her hand above the water, as told in the story, and gave the sword to the king. When Arthur was dying, he sent one of his Knights of the Round Table, Sir Bedivere, to throw the sword back into the lake from which he had received it.

The Knights of the Round Table were so called because they customarily sat about a huge marble table, circular in shape. Some say that thirteen knights could sit around that table; others say that as many as a hundred and fifty could find places there. There sat Sir Galahad, who would one day see the Holy Grail. Sir Gawain was there, nephew of King Arthur. Sir Percivale, too, was to see the Holy Grail. Sir Lancelot - Lancelot of the Lake, who was raised by that same Lady of the Lake who gave Arthur his sword - was the most famous of the Knights of the Round Table. He loved Queen Guinevere.

All the knights were sworn to uphold the laws of chivalry - to go to the aid of anyone in distress, to protect women and children, to fight honorably, to be pious and loyal to their king.

## ***I. Allan Finds a Champion***

"I cannot carry your message, Sir Knight."

Quiet-spoken was the lad, though his heart held a moment's fear as, scowling and menacing, the knight who sat so easily the large horse, flamed fury at his refusal.

"And why can you not? It is no idle play, boy, to flaunt Sir Pellimore. Brave knights have found the truth of this at bitter cost."

"Nevertheless, Sir Knight, you must needs find another message bearer. I am page to Sir Percival and he would deem it no service to him should I bear a strange knights message."

"Then, by my faith, you shall learn your lesson. Since you are but a youth it would prove but poor sport to thrust my sword through your worthless body. Yet shall I find Sir Percival and make him pay for the boorishness of his page. In the meantime, take you this."

With a sweep the speaker brought the flat side of his sword down. But, if perchance, he thought that the boy would await the blow he found surprise for that worthy skillfully evaded the weapon's downward thrust.

Now then was Sir Pellimore doubly wroth.

"Od's zounds, and you need a trouncing. And so shall I give it you, else my dignity would not hold its place." Suiting action to word the knight reared his horse, prepared to bring the boy to earth.

It might hare gone ill with Allan but for the appearance at the turn of the road of another figure - also on horseback. The new knight perceiving trouble, rode forward.

"What do we see here?" he questioned. "Sir Knight, whose name I do not know, it seems to me that you are in poor business to quarrel with so youthful a foe. What say you?"

"As to with whom I quarrel is no concern of anyone but myself. I can, however, to suit the purpose, change my foe. Such trouncing as I wish to give this lad I can easily give to you, Sir Knight, and you wish it?"

"You can do no more than try. It may not be so easy as your boasting would seeming indicate. Lad," and the newcomer turned to the boy, "why does this arrogant knight wish you harm?"

"He would have me carry a message, a challenge to Sir Kay, and that I cannot do, for even now I bear a message from Sir Percival, whose page I am but yesterday become. And I must hold true to my own lord and liege."

"True words and well spoken. And so for you, Sir Knight of the arrogant tongue, I hope your weapon speaks equally well. Prepare you, sir."

Sir Pellimore laughed loudly and disdainfully.

"I call this great fortune which brings me battle with you, sir, who are unknown but who I hope, none the less, are a true and brave knight."

The next second the two horses crashed together. Sir Pellimore soon proved his skill. The Unknown, equally at ease, contented himself with meeting onslaught after onslaught, parrying clever thrusts and wicked blows. So they battled for many an hour.

Allan, the boy, with eyes glistening, waited to see the outcome of the brave fight. The Unknown, his champion, perhaps would need his aid through some dire misfortune and he was prepared.

Now the Unknown changed his method from one of defense to one of offense. But Sir Pellimore was none the less skillful. The third charge of his foe he met so skillfully that both horses crashed to the ground. On foot, the two men then fought - well and long. Until, through inadvertence, the Unknown's foot slipped and the next moment found his shield splintered and sword broken.

"Now then, by my guardian saint, you are truly vanquished," Sir Pellimore exclaimed exultantly. "Say you so?"

But the Unknown had already hurled himself, weaponless, upon the seeming victor and seizing him about the waist with mighty strength, hurled him to the ground. And even as the fallen knight, much shaken, prepared to arise, lo, Merlin the Wizard appeared and cast him into a deep sleep.

"Sire," the Wizard declared, "do you indeed run many dangers that thy station should not warrant. And yet, I know not whether we, your loyal subjects, would have it otherwise."

Now Allan, the boy, realized he was in the presence of the great King. He threw himself upon his knees.

"Rise lad," said King Arthur kindly. "Sir Percival is indeed fortunate to have a page, who while so young, yet is so loyal. So shall we see you again. Kind Merlin," and the King turned to the Wizard, "awaken you this sleeping knight whose only sin seems an undue amount of surliness and arrogance, which his bravery and strength more than offset."

Now Sir Pellimore rubbed his eyes. "Where am I?" he muttered drowsily. Then as realization came, he sprang to his feet.

"Know you then, Sir Pellimore," said Merlin, "he with whom you fought is none other than Arthur, the King."

The knight stood motionless, dumbfounded. But only for a moment.

"If so, then am I prepared for such punishment as may come. But be it what it may, I can say this, that none with whom I fought has had more skill or has shown greater bravery and chivalry.

And more than that none can say."

And the knight bowed low his head, humbly and yet with a touch of pride.

"Thou art a brave knight, Sir Pellimore. And to us it seems, that aside from a hasty temper, thou couldst well honor us by joining the Knights of the Round Table. What saith thou?"

"That shall I gladly do. And here and now I pledge my loyalty to none other than Arthur, King of Britain, and to my fellow knights. And as for you, boy, I say it now - that my harsh tongue and temper ill became the true knight I claim to be."

"Brave words, Sir Pellimore," said the King. "So let us back to the castle. We see that Merlin is already ill at ease."

## ***2. Allan Goes Forth***

So then the four, the good King, Sir Pellimore, Merlin the Wizard, and Allan, page to Sir Percival, came to the great castle of Britain's king.

Arthur led them into the great hall in which were placed many small tables and in the center of them all was one of exceeding size and round. Here was to be found a place for Sir Pellimore but though the King searched long, few seats did he find which were not bespoken. Yet finally he found one which did well for the new arrival.

"Here then shall you find your place at the Round Table, good knight," said the King. "And we trust that you will bring renown and honor to your fellowship, succor to those who are in need and that always will you show true chivalry. And we doubt not but you will do all of these."

Sir Pellimore bowed low his head nor did he make reply because within him surged a great feeling of gratitude.

The King turned away and Merlin followed him to the upraised dais. So now the two seated themselves and joined in earnest talk.

At the door, Allan had waited, for he would not depart until His Majesty had seated himself. A strange gladness was in the boy's heart, for had not his King fought for him? Here in this court, he too would find adventure. Sir Percival mayhap, some day, would dub him knight, should he prove faithful and worthy. What greater glory could there be than to fight for such a King and with such brave men?

"But I must be off," he suddenly bethought himself, "else Sir Percival will not be pleased." And therewith, he made great haste to depart.

"Aye, sire," Merlin was now speaking, "my dream is indeed weighted with importance. But by the same taken, it cannot be known until you call your court together so that it may be heard by all."