

Lesson 1

SIR THOMAS MALORY'S BOOK OF KING ARTHUR AND HIS NOBLE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

In the 15th century the gentleman by the name Thomas Malory collected the **romances**¹ of King Arthur and arranged them in a series of stories. They began with the birth of Arthur and how he became a king. Then he told about the adventures of King Arthur and his **noble**² **knights**³. And then he ended the series with the death of these knights and of Arthur himself.

Thomas Malory was a knight himself and had fought in *the Hundred Years' War and the Wars of Roses*. His work was published in 1485 under the title of 'Sir Thomas Malory's book of King Arthur and his Noble Knights of the Round Table'. This work is divided into 21 books. These books retell various legends about King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table.

All heroes in these romances were simple **human beings**⁴ who loved and **suffered**⁵. Their **worship**⁶ of a **fair lady**⁷ becomes the **plot**⁸ of the story. Many kings and lords made wars against Arthur, but he overcame them all and won many battles. One of the best knights of King Arthur was Sir Lancelot of the Lake. He was kind and good and he was one of the King's best **champions**⁹.

He was the king no one could forget and many people of the middle Ages believed that Arthur would return some day.



The Birth of a King

Once upon a time Britain was ruled by a brave and wise king named Uther Pendragon. Under his wise **leadership**¹⁰, Britain was a peaceful country and its citizens *were* happy and **protected**. But the king had a **trouble**¹¹. He had not got any children. He had no son to **inherit**¹² the throne after his death, nor a daughter to make him happy. The king turned to the **wizard**¹³ Merlin for help. Merlin **took pity** on the poor king and agreed to help him. But with a **price**¹⁴. He wanted any child born of the union of the king's family would have *to be turned over to his care*. So, he helped Uther to marry his beloved woman Ygraine. Nine months

passed and the Queen gave birth to a baby boy. The royal couple named their son Arthur. But the King had promised to turn over any child born in his family to Merlin. So, Arthur gave his *only son* over to Merlin's care, and his wife was forced to say goodbye to her child forever. Merlin **assured**¹⁵ her it was for her boy's own good, but she never forgave him.

After being crowned king, Arthur proved that he was the greatest **warrior**¹⁶ ever alive. But his real strength he had received from his instructor, Merlin, who had taught him to overcome his enemies. From Merlin, Arthur had learned to be a wise and just king, who fought only to protect his people. The people of Britain happily **welcomed**¹⁷ him as their new king. Under his rule, laws were made with **justice**¹⁸ and **mercy**¹⁹, and the people *were treated fairly*. He named his kingdom Camelot, and his coat of arms was the red dragon. He ruled in Britain about fifteen years. Arthur brought order and peace to his kingdom while he ruled. He was honest, wise and fair to all his knights. All were equal and the King *was just 'first among equals'*.

A Queen for a Kingdom

But like his father before him, Arthur had no wife. One night, when Arthur fought a battle, his **sword**²⁰ was broken. That night he decided to stay and rest at a local castle. Suddenly he heard the sound of a **harp**²¹ in the castle halls. He arose from his bed and followed the sound until he came upon a woman sitting *all alone* in her bedroom. Her name was Guinever, and she was the most beautiful woman Arthur had ever seen. He decided to marry her. The next day, he asked her father for her hand, and he gladly agreed. The **announcement**²² was made later

that day. The people of Camelot were happy. They were glad to see their beloved king happy in love. Everyone in the kingdom was filled with excitement and tears of joy. Soon Arthur and Guinever married. The entire kingdom celebrated. There was much feasting and dancing at the **wedding**²³ and the people from all the parts of the kingdom came to see their wedding ceremony. As a wedding present, Merlin gave them a round table, large



enough to seat all of Arthur's knights. They had their meetings at a round table so that there should not be any first or last, at the top or at the foot of the table. Many years passed, and Arthur and his wife lived together happily.

- 1) a romance — пригода
- 2) noble — шляхетний
- 3) a knight — лицар
- 4) a human being — людина
- 5) to suffer — страждати
- 6) worship — обожнювання, поклоніння
- 7) fair lady — гарна пані
- 8) a plot — зміст
- 9) a champion — воїн, захисник, переможець
- 10) leadership — керівництво
- 11) a trouble — проблема, турбота
- 12) to inherit — успадкувати (трон)
- 13) a wizard — чаклун
- 14) a price — жертва
- 15) to assure — запевняти
- 16) a warrior — воїн
- 17) to welcome — вітати, щиро приймати
- 18) justice — справедливість
- 19) mercy — милосердя
- 20) a sword — меч
- 21) a harp — арфа (муз. інструмент)
- 22) an announcement — оголошення
- 23) a wedding — весілля, шлюб

Remember!

the Hundred Year's War and the War of Roses — Столітня війна та війна Троянд

to be protected — бути захищеним

to take pity — співчувати, жаліти

to be turned over smb's care — віддати під чийсь опіку

only son — єдиний син

to be treated fairly — справедливо ставитися (до людей)

to be 'first among equals' — бути «першим серед рівних»

all alone — повністю самотня

Pre-Reading Activity

Ex. 1. Practise the pronunciation of the words from the text.

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|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Arthur ['ɑ:θə] | 11) Ygraine ['i:greɪn] |
| 2) a romance [rəʊ'mæns] | 12) a couple ['kʌpl] |
| 3) noble ['nəʊbl] | 13) to assure [ə'ʃʊə] |
| 4) a knight [naɪt] | 14) a warrior ['wɒrɪə] |
| 5) a hero ['hɪərəʊ] | 15) alive [ə'laɪv] |
| 6) to worship ['wɜ:ʃɪp] | 16) a sword [sɔ:d] |
| 7) Lancelot ['lɑ:nsələt] | 17) a castle ['kɑ:sl] |
| 8) Uther ['ju:θə] | 18) feasting ['fi:stɪŋ] |
| 9) to inherit [ɪn'herrɪt] | 19) a ceremony ['serəməni] |
| 10) a wizard ['wɪzəd] | |

Vocabulary and Grammar Tasks

Ex. 2. Choose the correct variant.

- Thomas Malory told about the ... of King Arthur.
a) legends b) books c) adventures
- Thomas Malory was ... himself.
a) a writer b) a knight c) a king
- His book was published under the ... of 'Sir Thomas Malory's book of King Arthur and his Noble Knights of the Round Table'
a) name b) title c) term
- All heroes in these ... were simple people who loved and suffered
a) romances b) fairy tales c) love stories
- But the king had
a) a treasure b) an illness c) a trouble
- Merlin wanted ... for his help.
a) satisfaction b) money c) a price
- Arthur proved he was the greatest ... ever alive.
a) king b) warrior c) wizard
- Arthur fought a battle and his ... was broken.
a) sword b) knife c) blade
- At a local castle Arthur heard the sound of
a) a piano b) a guitar c) a harp
- Everyone in the kingdom was filled with
a) fear b) excitement c) wonder