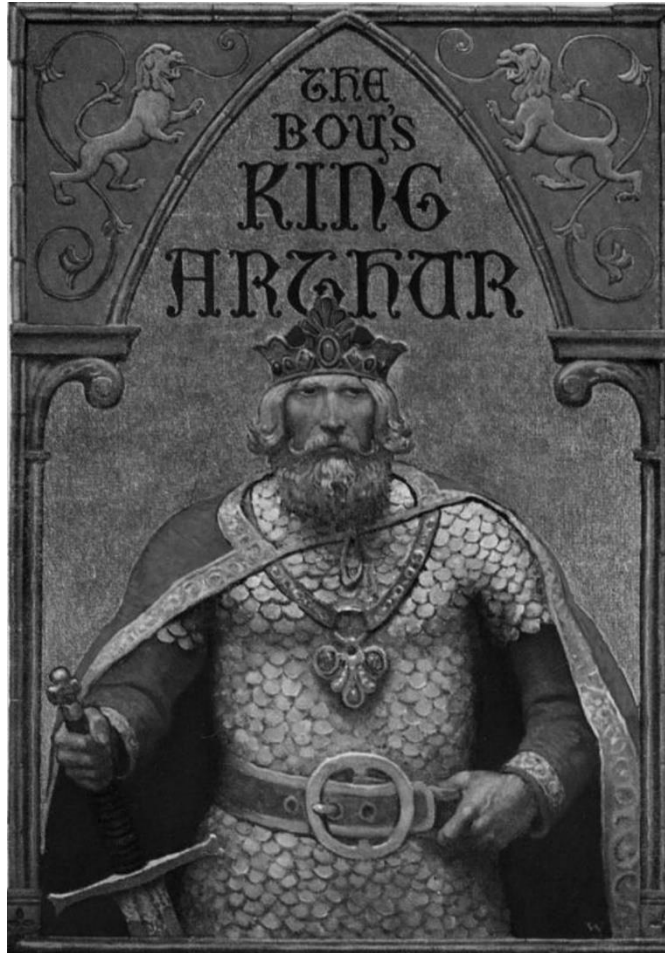


Jack Baiesi



A Brief History of King Arthur

Vol 1 - How Arthur Became King

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Preface

The Story of King Arthur is full of knightly encounters, valorous deeds and acts of courtesy and can therefore touch everybody's imagination.

The story of King Arthur began in Wales in the fifth century and is one of the oldest legends of the British Isles. There are some doubts about how much in this story is true and how much due to the imagination. It is admitted that in those years there was a Celtic king named Arthur who was a noble sovereign who added glory to the Celtic race.

King Arthur became the ideal sovereign of the Britons and they enriched him with every noble trait which could be borrowed from the lives of their heroes.

It is the purpose of this first volume to relate the fascinating story of King Arthur's happy reign and the many valiant deeds of himself and his knights.

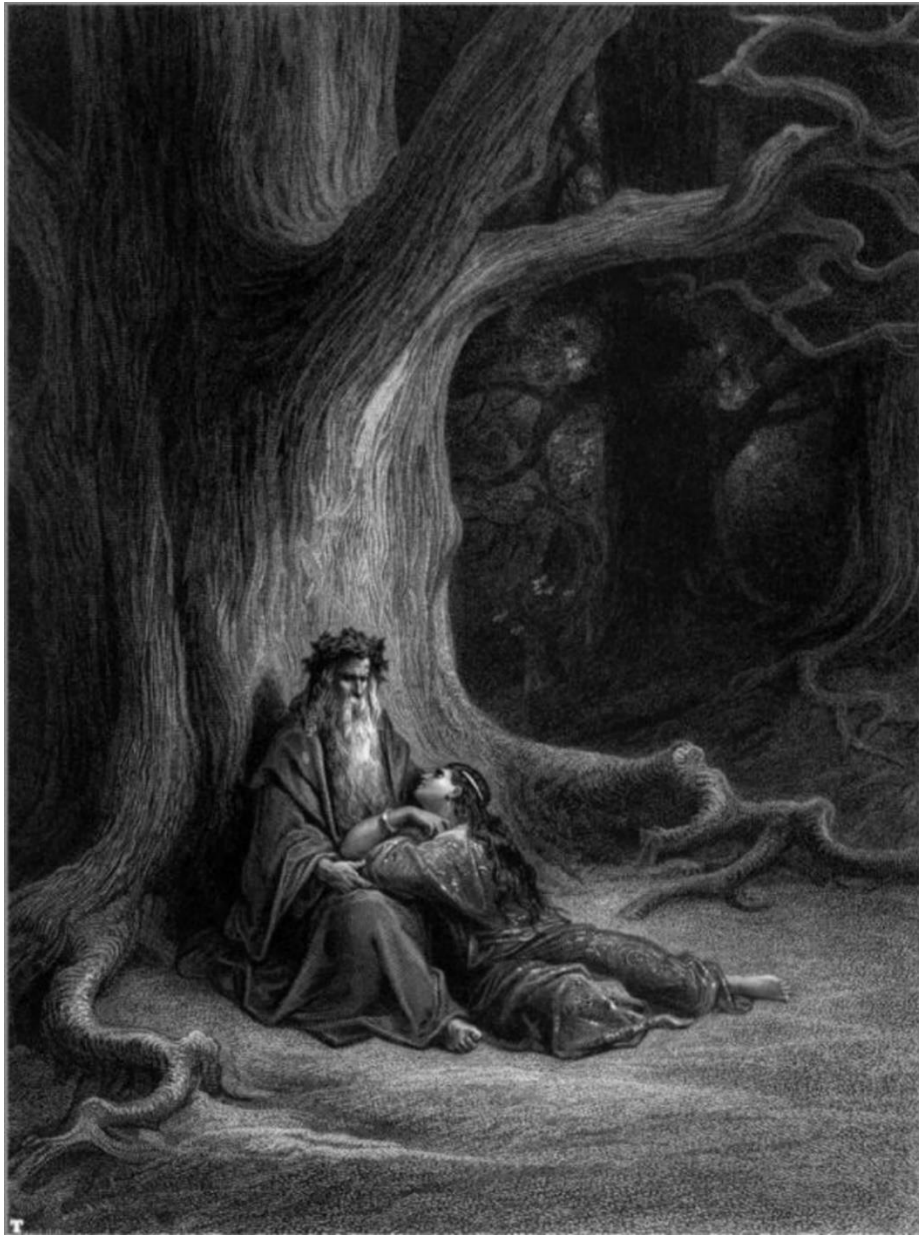


King Arthur

His Birth and His Youth

King Arthur was the son of Uther Pendragon, King of Britain, and the fair Igraine of Cornwall.

Uther had some problems in convincing Igraine to become his queen and therefore he asked for the help of a magician named Merlin who solved the problem and Uther and Igraine married happily.



Merlin

For this help, the king promised that he would give their son to Merlin so that he could raise him up as he saw fit. When in the course of time the son was born, King Uther gave the boy to Merlin who had him baptized by the name of Arthur.



Merlin took the new-born Arthur

A worthy knight named Sir Ector was charged by Merlin to raise Arthur, without knowing that he was the king's son.



Sir Ector

The Death of Uther

When Arthur was still a young boy, his father becomes seriously ill and it was clear that his death was near. Since the birth of Arthur was kept a secret, all the knights and nobles were very worried because they supposed that the king would leave no heir to the throne to succeed him.

Merlin summoned all the great nobles together with The Archbishop of Canterbury into the chamber where the king was dying. He asked him if his son Arthur should be his heir to the throne. Uther replies that he gives Arthur God's blessing and that he is the only one who has the right to claim the crown. After this reply, Uther died.

None of the nobles who were present understood the meaning of the king's dying words because they knew nothing of any son of Uther's named Arthur. Even Queen Igraine did not know what happened to his son and whether he was dead or alive. A great contention arose in the realm and every noble who could rely on a few thousands of followers was ready to claim the crown.

Merlin realized that the country was going toward its ruin and he therefore counselled the Archbishop to summon a solemn festival with all the nobles in London, on Christmas Eve. The hope was that some miracle could manifest to all of them who the throne rightly belonged to.

The Mystic Sword

The assembly was held, and all the nobles and many knights who had not left the realm were present. Among them was Sir Ector who had brought up Arthur in ignorance of his lineage. He had been kind to the boy and had been careful to train him in all the knightly exercises and accomplishments that were held to be fitting for a man of rank. Along with Sir Ector came his son Sir Kay, a valiant knight, and with him young Arthur, his foster brother.

After a mass in the greatest church in London was held, the lords and nobles saw in the churchyard against the altar a great stone four feet square resembling a marble block. On the top of the stone, there was a solid steel anvil in which a fair sword was stuck. In the sword hilt these words were engraved:

"WHO PULLETH OUT THIS SWORD FROM THIS STONE AND ANVIL IS RIGHTWISE BORN KING OF ENGLAND"

Immediately all the nobles that were present, one after another, tried to draw forth the sword, but none of them could stir it and the sword remained fixed in the anvil.

Then, the Archbishop said that none of the nobles that were present was able to achieve the sword and therefore it was necessary to proclaim that every man who wished to may try to draw forth the sword.

Kings, nobles, and valiant knights came from all parts of England, but none was able to draw the sword from the anvil. To keep all the people together, Merlin and the Archbishop decided to hold a tournament on New Year's Day.



Among the nobles who took part in the tournament, there was Sir Kay with his squire Arthur. Riding to the place of the tournament, Sir Kay realized that he left his sword at his father lodging and so he asked Arthur to go back and bring his sword.

When Arthur came to the house, he found it closed because the households went to see the tournament. He was grieved because he could not get Sir Kay's sword. On the way back to the place where the tournament was in progress, he passed close to the churchyard where the mystic sword was standing. He did not meet

anybody and therefore he took the sword by the handle and easily drew it from the stone.



At a gallop, he carried it to his brother. As soon as Sir Kay saw it, he recognized that it was the sword in the stone. Since he was quite proud and ambitious, he went to his father and said to Sir Ector that he has the sword of the stone and therefore he should be chosen as king of the land.

Sir Ector, who knew to whom the throne belonged, did not believe that Sir Kay had drawn the sword from the anvil, led him to the churchyard together with Arthur. Once there, he asked his son to replace the sword and again remove it. Sir Kay put

back the sword into place but when he tried to remove it by applying all his strength, he was not able to stir it.

At this point, Sir Ector asked his son who gave him the sword and he confessed that he has gotten it from Arthur. Then Sir Ector asked Arthur how he got the sword. Arthur told him that he went home to get his brother's sword, but he did not find anybody, and the house had been closed. He remembered the sword in the churchyard, and he went there and pulled the sword without effort.

How He became a King

Then Sir Ector observed Arthur draw forth the sword and that he did it quite easily, so he told Arthur that he was the king of this land.



King Arthur

Arthur asked immediately why he should be the king of this land. Sir Ector replied that no man could draw forth this sword unless he was to be the rightful king of the land.

After this statement, both Sir Ector and Sir Kay fell down on their knees before Arthur. He was quite surprised and ask them “Why his father and brother kneel before me”. Sir Ector thought that it was the time to tell Arthur the truth, that he was not his son and that he received him from Merlin when he was a child, after which he had brought him up as his own son. He added that he hopes that he will become his good and gracious lord when he takes over as a king. Arthur replied that he would be greatly to blame if he will not try to satisfy every desire of the man who was a father for him.

Then they went to the Archbishop and told him how Arthur had drawn the sword from the anvil. After twelve days the Archbishop held a solemn service that was attended by all the nobles and nights and Arthur drew forth the sword from the anvil and again none could move.

Many of the nobles were very wroth and ashamde because it seemed that the land could be governed by a boy with no royal blood. They decided to wait until Candlemas when many more lords could come. None was able to draw the sword except Arthur. They decided on another stop until Easter but nothing new happened. The final date of Pentecost was fixed. Many men of every station arrived and tried to draw the sword but none of them was successful. On the other hand, Arthur pulled it forth easily before all the lords and commons.

Then the commons cried out all at once that Arthur was their king because this was God’ will and consequently they will slay all the people that plotted against him. Both rich and poor people knelt down and asked Arthur to excuse them for the delay with which they acknowledged him as their king.

Arthur forgave them and offered his sword upon the altar where was the Archbishop and he was made a knight by the best man there. Soon after he was crowned king of the land and swore to his lords and commons to be a true king, to stand with true justice all the days of his life.



King Arthur

I hope you enjoyed the first volume of this fascinating story and will leave an honest review on Amazon.

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