

Book One, Chapter 1: The Two Swords

"A little while after his birth at dark Tintagel, Uther, who hearkened to my words, gave the child into my care, and I bore him to Avalon, the Land of Mystery."

READING NOTES

Camelot	capital of Arthur's kingdom; modern-day Winchester, England
Uther Pendragon	king of Briton; father of Arthur
Igrayne	mother of Arthur; unfaithful wife of Gorlois
Avalon	Land of Mystery; place where Merlin took Arthur as an infant
Excalibur	Arthur's sword with magical scabbard
Logres (Lów-gris)	the name given to the land over which Arthur ruled
King Pellinore	killed knights for traveling on a road; nearly killed Arthur, and then began to chase the "Questing Beast"
Britons	a Celtic people inhabiting Britain before the time of the Roman invasion
Saxons	Germanic tribe that invaded Britain in the 5th and 6th centuries
Sir Ector	Arthur's foster father

VOCABULARY: Write the meaning of each bold word or phrase.

1. set a rich **pavilion** over it _____
*ornate tent
2. bowing his head in **reverence** _____
*awe; respect
3. did **homage** to Arthur _____
*a ceremony by which a man acknowledged himself the vassal of a lord; special honor

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS: Answer the following in complete sentences.

1. Describe the state of Britain just before King Arthur claims the throne.
Britain had never been in a worse condition. Knights were fighting among themselves, and the Saxons were conquering much of the land.

2. Where does Merlin take the baby Arthur, and what gifts does he receive there?
Merlin takes him to Avalon. The fairies promise that Arthur will be the best knight, the greatest king in Britain, and that he will live a long time.

3. What is Arthur's first goal as king?
*He plans to drive the Saxons out of Britain.

4. What is King Pellinore doing that causes a problem?

He sets up a pavilion by the road and kills any knight that passes.

5. How does Arthur come to possess Excalibur?

Merlin takes Arthur to a lake. Arthur gets into a boat and takes the sword from a hand stretching out of the water.

6. Why is Arthur's scabbard worth more than his sword?

*While he wears the scabbard, Arthur will not die of blood loss.

QUOTATION

1. Who said the quotation? Merlin To whom? angry kings and knights

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Look at the picture on the page preceding Chapter 1 in your book. Who is in the picture? What castle is in the background? What is happening?
2. If you had to divide this chapter into two different parts, where would you divide it, and why?

ENRICHMENT

1. Scholars debate the historicity of King Arthur. It is not implausible that a warlord led a successful uprising against barbarian settlers around 500 A.D. Perhaps that man was Arthur. There is no evidence that disproves such a thesis. Think of what evidence would convince you that the legends of Arthur are true or false. Write a paragraph explaining what such evidence would look like.

Answers will vary.

2. On a separate piece of paper, write a summary of Arthur and Merlin's relationship. Why is it significant?
Answers will vary.