

The legend of the sword in the stone

The truth about King Arthur is hard to work out. Various sources throughout history have mentioned this legendary king. His name appears in monks' written accounts, historical records and literature written hundreds of years after he lived. However, fact and fiction appear to have been combined. It is unlikely anyone will ever know the whole truth about King Arthur, and whether he even existed at all.

Here is one story about the legendary king, but is it fact, fiction or both?



Merlin frowned as he gazed at the newborn baby. In return, the baby smiled and gurgled at the magician. Merlin's frown instantly melted away. He gently stroked the baby's soft hair and vowed to protect the future King of England resting in his arms.

'No one can know this baby is Arthur, son of Uther Pendragon and rightful heir to the throne,' Merlin mumbled to himself. 'He must stay hidden, until the time comes for him to claim his rightful place.'

With that, the wise magician placed Arthur in the care of Sir Ector, a nobleman. Sir Ector feebly argued it was not his job to look after an abandoned child, but knew better than to disobey the powerful Merlin. Sir Ector dutifully agreed to raise Arthur as his own, never knowing that the child was King Uther's son.

'I've hidden Arthur, so he is safe for now,' Merlin later explained to King Uther. 'One day, he will need to fulfil his duty as king. I will set a sword into a stone, and only Arthur will be able to withdraw it. When he pulls the sword from the stone, he will become king.'

Soon after, the great King Uther died and the country was left without a king. Legend of the stone spread far and wide. Knights, lords and noblemen believed they would be crowned leader if they could pull the sword from the stone. However, none of them succeeded. The sword stubbornly refused to move for even the strongest of men, and patiently awaited its true king.

As Arthur grew older, he learnt the legend of the sword in the stone. He knew he would never be strong enough to release the sword. His bony arms and skinny legs were no match for the strong, broad men who had previously tried to release the sword. However, intrigued by the challenge, he wanted a fair chance. Most people

had grown bored with the legend, but were always curious to witness anyone new who dared to try. Those who had already failed the challenge scorned Arthur and laughed cruelly. Arthur was unconcerned by the taunts and mustered all of his strength. Expecting to struggle and sweat, he was shocked when he fell clumsily to the ground. The crowd that had formed fell deathly silent. Their eyes were glued to Arthur's hand. Confused by their reaction, Arthur turned to see what they were staring at. There in his hand was the sword!



'Cheat!' screamed an enraged onlooker. 'He must have cheated! How could such a weak, young boy pull out the sword? Return the sword and let me have a go!' The furious man ripped the sword from Arthur's hand and placed it back in the stone. Then, he pulled hard on the sword's handle, but it remained firmly in the stone's grasp. Another baffled onlooker stepped forward and he too attempted to release the sword. Man after man tried, and man after man failed.

Finally, an elderly woman, who had noticed the look of bewilderment on Arthur's face, insisted he have another go. Arthur approached the stone calmly. Deep inside, he knew he could remove the sword again. Gently, but confidently, Arthur grasped the sword's handle and pulled the sword into the air. The crowd were again shocked, but then bowed to their new king.

Arthur went on to become a brave and remarkable king. His people loved him and his knights respected him. The country had remained without a king for many years and at last it had a worthy leader.