

(WHEN CAST MEMBERS ARE IN PLACE, THE READING BEGINS.)

READER 1: Uther Pendragon was a great king of England. He was strong and well-loved. His queen was going to have a child, a child who would be heir to the throne.

READER 2: All should have been well, but Merlin, Uther Pendragon's friend, could see into the future, and the future was dismal.

(MERLIN PLACES HANDS TO TEMPLES AND CLOSES EYES.)

3/MERLIN: Great king, you will soon fall ill and die.

READER 4: This was not the kind of news Uther Pendragon wanted to hear.

(MERLIN PLACES HAND OVER HEART AND BOWS HEAD.)

3/MERLIN: Your child will not live to adulthood, for there will be many battles to take the throne. He will surely die, unless you let me save him for you and for England.

READER 1: Uther Pendragon had long depended on Merlin for advice. He knew Merlin's visions were accurate, so he agreed to do as Merlin wished.

(MERLIN PLACES HANDS TOGETHER, IN PRAYING POSE.)

3/MERLIN: As soon as the child is born, I will take it to the home of one of your most trusted knights, Sir Ector. He will instruct the child in knightly ways. He will not fail.

READER 2: So, as soon as the baby was born, Merlin whisked the child to the home of Sir Ector.

(SIR ECTOR POINTS TOWARD MERLIN.)

5/SIR ECTOR: What child is this?

(MERLIN PRETENDS TO HAND CHILD TO SIR ECTOR.)

3/MERLIN: Do not ask. You must teach the child all he needs to know to be a knight. Guide this lad as you do your own son, Kay. You will be greatly rewarded.

(SIR ECTOR MIMES ACCEPTING THE BABY.)

5/SIR ECTOR: I am honored to be asked. You may be sure that I am worthy of your trust.

READER 4: As Merlin predicted, King Uther Pendragon soon died. England was in a state of turmoil. The chaos continued for over fifteen years.

(ARCHBISHOP HOLDS HANDS LEVEL WITH HEAD AND LOOKS UPWARD IN FRUSTRATION.)

6/ARCHBISHOP: England is in danger from outside forces because we squabble at home. Is there no answer?

3/MERLIN: There is an answer. The rightful king of England shall be known to all by the new year.

6/ARCHBISHOP: How will we recognize the king?

(MERLIN POINTS TO LEFT AND ARCHBISHOP LOOKS WHERE MERLIN POINTS.)

3/MERLIN: Look outside in the churchyard.

(ARCHBISHOP LOOKS VERY SURPRISED.)

READER 1: When the Archbishop looked outside, he saw a huge block of marble and in that marble stone was a sword.

(ARCHBISHOP SQUINTS AND READS INSCRIPTION SLOWLY.)

6/ARCHBISHOP: What is this? The inscription says "Whoever pulls this sword from this stone is king of all England by right of birth."

READER 2: All the congregation gathered round the stone. Many barons attempted to pull the sword from the stone, but none could do it.

(ARCHBISHOP POINTS UPWARD.)

6/ARCHBISHOP: We will hold a special jousting tournament on New Year's Day. All the great knights and barons will be in London for the contest. God will surely let his choice be known.

READER 4: News of the peculiar stone and its treasure spread quickly. Nobility from all over the land journeyed to London for the tournament.

READER 1: The archbishop set a guard around the stone. A special time for men to try and pull the sword from the stone was set.

READER 2: Now, Sir Ector lived far from London, but it was his custom to go to the city at the Christmas season. On this year, he took the two boys with him.

(ECTOR, KAY, AND ARTHUR HOLD HANDS IN FRONT, WAIST HIGH AND BOUNCE SLIGHTLY AS IF HOLDING REINS ON A HORSE.)

READER 4: Sir Ector, as Merlin predicted, had supervised very carefully the growth and development of his son Kay and his foster son, Arthur. Both were fine young men.

READER 1: Kay had received his knighthood, and Arthur was destined to become a knight in a few years.

5/SIR ECTOR: My dear sons, we will journey to London for the great tournament. Sir Kay, now that you are a knight, you may participate.

(SIR KAY TOUCHES HIS HAT IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.)

- 7/SIR KAY:** That is my desire. I am eager to make you proud of me.
- READER 2:** Arthur served Sir Kay as an assistant. Arthur was very proud of his brother.
- READER 4:** Arthur thought that Kay was his real brother and Ector was his real father, for the truth had not yet been revealed.
- 5/SIR ECTOR:** London seems quite busy. This tournament has attracted many knights.
- (ARTHUR LOOKS LEFT, THEN RIGHT.)
- 8/ARTHUR:** May I go explore, Father? The city is full of interesting sights.
- (SIR ECTOR POINTS TO THE RIGHT. ARTHUR NODS.)
- 5/SIR ECTOR:** Of course, but meet us at the stands before the competition begins.
- READER 1:** Sir Ector and Sir Kay waved to Arthur and went to the churchyard where they saw the sword in the stone.
- 6/ARCHBISHOP:** Greetings to you, Sir Ector and Sir Kay. Have you heard that the true king of England will soon be made known?
- 7/SIR KAY:** No, we live far from London and rarely hear the news.
- 6/ARCHBISHOP:** Any knight or baron may attempt to remove the sword from the stone after the jousting. Both you and Sir Kay should participate.