

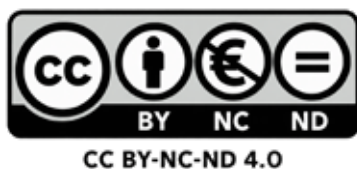
THE LADY OF THE LAKE

an adaptation of the Arthurian Cycle

illustrated by Ornella Picard

Easy
to read





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an adaptation
of the Arthurian cycle

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Introduction

This book tells an old story.
This story is called
the legend of King Arthur.
It has been told for hundreds of years.
It comes mainly from England
and France.
No one knows if Arthur really existed.
Maybe he's a real person.
Perhaps he has become a legend.
Even today, no one knows the answer.
There are also many versions of this story.
The characters are sometimes different.
Some events change.

But we always find the same heroes.

- Arthur, the king.
- Merlin, the magician.
- Viviane, the Lady of the Lake.
- Lancelot, the knight.
- Guinevere, the queen.

This book offers a simple version of this legend.

It tells the story of Viviane, the Lady of the Lake:

- how she meets Merlin.
- how she protects young Lancelot.
- how she accompanies Arthur, from his childhood until his last journey.

This story is about magic.
But above all, it is about human beings.
It shows that courage is important.
How precious friendship is.
That trust is fragile.
And that even the greatest heroes
can make mistakes.
This is why the legend of King Arthur
is still told today.



CHAPTER 1

The Meeting

How Viviane meets Merlin.

Viviane is a young woman.
She lives alone near a large lake.
Nobody knows when she arrived.
Nobody knows where she comes from.
But Viviane has always known the lake.
The lake is calm and deep.
It is said that it hides very ancient magic.

Every morning,
Viviane walks by the water.

She likes to watch the fish
slip beneath the surface,
and listen to the wind in the trees,
Viviane likes silence.
The lake is her refuge.
It is her favourite place.

One day, she sees a figure
at the edge of the lake.
The man is wearing a long cape.
His beard reaches almost to his belt.
He doesn't move.
It looks as though he is waiting for
someone.

Viviane hesitates.
Then she approaches.

The man turns around and smiles at her.

— Hello, Viviane.

Viviane is surprised.

She doesn't know this man.

However, he already knows his first name.

The man's name is Merlin.

He picks a little flower.

— This plant can heal a wound.

He then shows a gray leaf.

— This one can make you sleep.

Viviane frowns.

How can he know all this?

A bird comes to land on Merlin's shoulder.

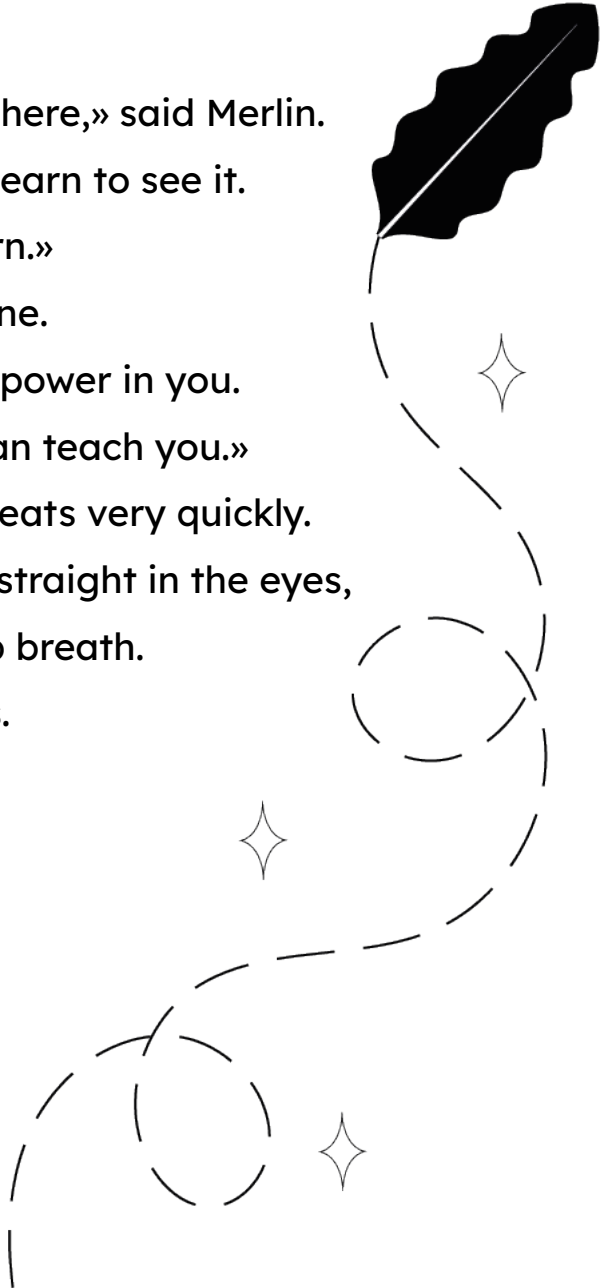
Viviane opens her eyes wide.

The bird doesn't seem to be afraid.

Then a wolf appears between the trees.
Viviane holds her breath.
The wolf approaches the old man.
He slowly lowers his head.
Then he disappears into the forest.
Viviane understands that the animals
trust this man.

Merlin picks up a leaf
that has fallen on the ground.
He blows gently on it.
The leaf begins to glow.
And it flies away.
It circles Viviane like a little golden bird.
Finally, it falls back into his hand.
Viviane has never seen anything like this.

«Magic is everywhere,» said Merlin.
You just have to learn to see it.
«You too can learn.»
«Me?» asks Viviane.
«Yes. I see great power in you.
If you want... I can teach you.»
Viviane's heart beats very quickly.
She looks Merlin straight in the eyes,
and takes a deep breath.
«Yes,» she replies.





CHAPTER 2

Learning

How Merlin teaches Viviane magic.

Every morning,
Viviane finds Merlin near the lake.
The magician teaches her to see the
world differently.
The first day, Merlin opens his hand.
A small light appears.
It dances between his fingers.
Then she disappears.
— Yours, now.
Viviane tries.

Nothing happens.
Viviane is disappointed.
Merlin laughs.
— Magic requires patience.

The next day,
Merlin shows her another spell.
He extends his hand towards the lake.
Small ripples appear on the surface
of the water.
Yet no one touches it.
Viviane opens her eyes wide.
In turn, she tries.
The water begins to ripple.
Then it becomes calm again.

The days still pass.

Merlin teaches Viviane
to listen to the wind.
To recognize the plants.
To feel the magic hidden in the forest.

At the beginning,
Viviane makes a lot of mistakes.
Her light disappears too quickly.
Leaves fall instead of flying.
Sometimes nothing works.
But Viviane does not give up.
She starts again.
Again.
And again.
She observes everything.
She asks a lot of questions.
Merlin always responds with patience.





One morning, a little light finally appears
in Viviane's hand.

It stays on for a few seconds.

Viviane bursts out laughing.

Merlin is proud of her.

From that day on, everything went faster.

Viviane learns very quickly.

Sometimes Merlin doesn't even need to
speak anymore.

She understands before he explains.

She makes the leaves dance.

She makes a flower bloom.

She calms an injured bird.

She sees images in the lake water.

She also learns to protect
the places she loves.

Merlin looks at her in awe.
Every day, Viviane becomes stronger.
Soon she is almost as powerful as him.

The seasons pass.
Each day brings a new discovery.
Every evening, they return near the lake.
Viviane thinks that these happy days will
last forever.

But, some evenings, Merlin seems worried.
He looks at the stars for a long time.
He listens to the wind.
Then he lowers his head.
Viviane notices this.
—What's going on? she asks.
Merlin responds darkly:

— The world of men is changing.

Viviane doesn't understand.

Merlin continues:

— The stars announce difficult days.

Kings war with each other.

Men fight.

They forget peace.

They forget wisdom.



The magician looks at the lake.

His face is serious.

— I have to leave.

I have a very important mission.

Viviane feels that something big
is going to happen.





CHAPTER 3

Young Arthur

How Arthur becomes king.

Merlin leaves the lake.

Before leaving, he said to Viviane:

— I have to protect a child.

One day he will become king.

His destiny is very important.

Viviane watches Merlin walk away.

Meanwhile, a boy grows up far away.

His name is Arthur.

Arthur doesn't live in a castle.

He lives with a knight.

His family loves him.

Nobody tells him the truth.

Arthur does not know that he is the son of
a king.

He grows up like other children.

He learns to ride a horse.

To run.

To fight with a wooden sword.

Arthur is brave.

He helps the weakest.

He always shares what he has.

Merlin sometimes comes to visit him.

The old magician gives him advice.

— A good king is not the strongest.

He is the one who protects his people.
Arthur listens attentively.

The years pass.
The old king dies.
The kingdom no longer has a king.
The great lords argue.
Everyone wants to take power.
The country is becoming worried.
One morning, a large sword
appears in front of a church.
It is planted in a large stone.
On the sword, a few words
are engraved.
“He who draws out this
sword will be the true king.”
Many men try.



The strongest pull with all their might.

But no one succeeds.

Arthur looks at the knights.

Then he approaches the stone.

He places his hands on the sword.

He pulls gently.

The sword comes out of the stone
effortlessly.

Everyone remains silent.

The knights can't believe their eyes.

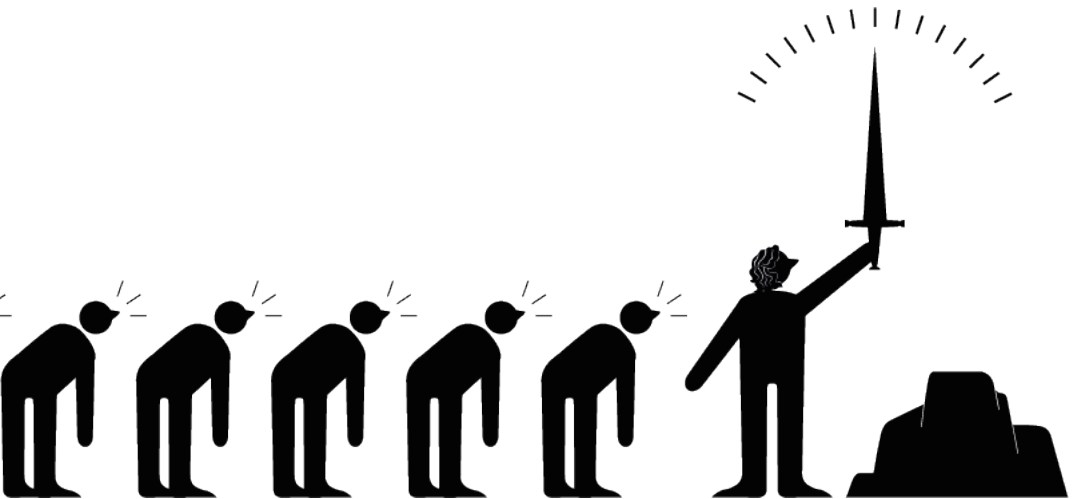
Merlin steps forward.

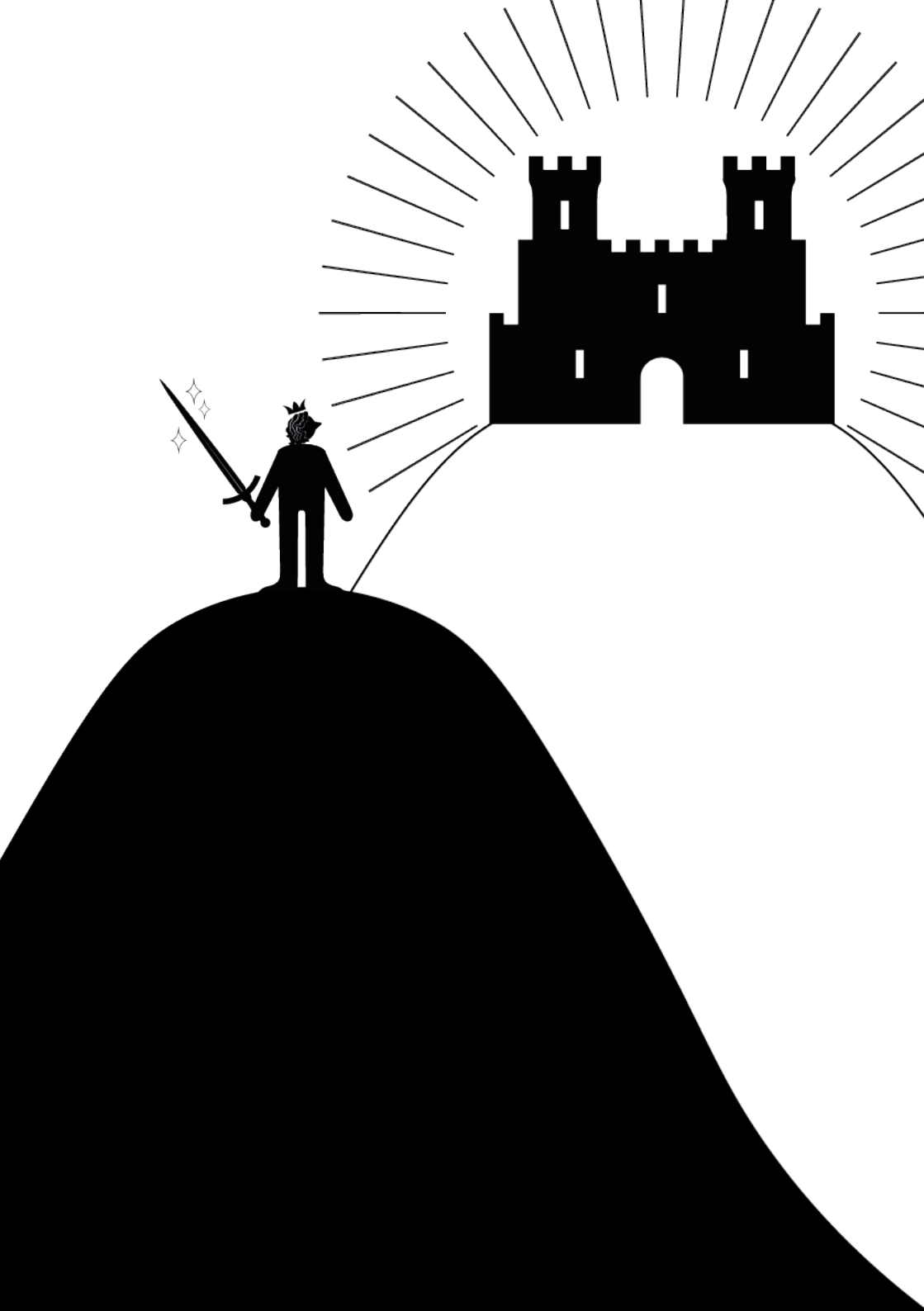
He smiles.

—Here is the king that the kingdom
has been waiting for.



Arthur is surprised.
He doesn't feel any different
from anyone else.
But he understands
that his life has just changed.
Far away, near the lake,
Viviane looks at the stars.
She thinks of Merlin.
She feels that her mission is progressing.
Soon, their paths will cross again.





CHAPTER 4

The Kingdom of Camelot

How Arthur builds a kingdom of peace.

Arthur becomes king.

At first, many people doubted him.

He is young.

He never ruled a kingdom.

Some lords refuse to obey him.

But Arthur is not discouraged.

He listens to Merlin's advice.

He prefers to speak before fighting.

Little by little, the lords trust him.

Peace returns to the kingdom.

When the kingdom is calmer,
Arthur sets up his court in Camelot.
Camelot is a large castle surrounded by a
city.

Men and women come from across the
kingdom.

Some become knights.

Others work at the castle.

Together, they bring Camelot to life.

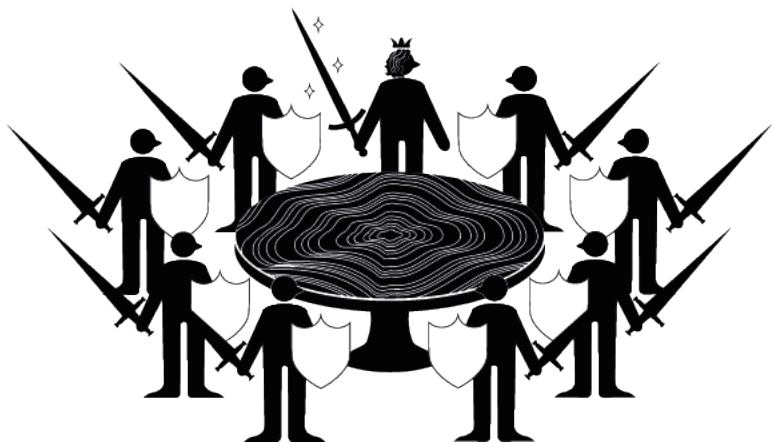
Arthur wants to bring together the best
knights in the kingdom.

He also wants his knights to respect each
other.

He doesn't want them to compete for the
best seat.

He had a large round table built.
Around this table, all knights are equal.
No one is more important than another.
Everyone can give their opinion.

Arthur wants a just kingdom.
He wants to protect the weakest.
He wants the peace to last a long time.
Merlin often stays by his side.



The magician advises the king.
He reminds him
that power requires wisdom.
Sometimes Merlin disappears
for several days.
He returns near the lake.
Viviane is waiting for him.
She is happy to see him again.
Merlin tells her what is happening
in Camelot.
Viviane listens attentively.
She understands that the kingdom
is getting stronger.
«Arthur will be a great king,» says Merlin.

Before leaving, Merlin looks at the forest.

Then he says softly:

— The kingdom still needs new heroes.

Viviane doesn't know it yet.

Soon, a young boy will enter her life.

His name is Lancelot.





CHAPTER 5

Lancelot of the Lake

How Viviane raises young Lancelot.

A few years pass.

Arthur's kingdom is at peace.

Merlin continues to advise the king.

Viviane always watches over the lake
and the forest.

One morning, Viviane hears screams.

She sees a young woman running
near the lake.

The woman holds a baby against her.
She is very scared.
Armed men pursue her.
Viviane understands
that the child is in great danger.
She looks at the baby.
In his eyes she sees a great light.
Her heart tells her that this child
has an exceptional destiny.
Viviane raises her hands.
A thick fog covers the lake.
The men no longer see anything.
They stop.
Viviane approaches the young woman.
— Give me your child.
I will protect him.

Viviane gently takes the child in her arms.
The waters of the lake part before her.
She disappears with the baby.
Moments later, the fog clears.
The men no longer find anyone.

At the bottom of the lake
there is a wonderful place.
It is a quiet and protected place.
No one can find him.
From that day on,
Viviane raised the child as her son.
The little boy's name is Lancelot.

The days pass.
Little by little, Lancelot grows up.

He likes to run in the forest.
He observes the animals.
He helps Viviane take care of the lake.
Viviane teaches him to listen to the wind.
To respect the trees.
To protect living beings.
Lancelot learns quickly.
But he prefers to wield a wooden sword.
Viviane laughs.
— Everyone has their own talent.

The years pass.
Lancelot becomes a young man.
He is strong.
He is courageous.
He is generous.

He always helps others before thinking
about himself.

Viviane is proud of him.

One evening she said to him:

— It's time to leave the lake.

Lancelot lowers his head.

He loves this place.

He loves life with Viviane.

But he knows she's right.

Viviane hands him a sword.

— Go and join King Arthur.

He needs good knights.

The next morning,

Lancelot rides on horseback.

Viviane smiles at him.

— Never forget what you learned here.

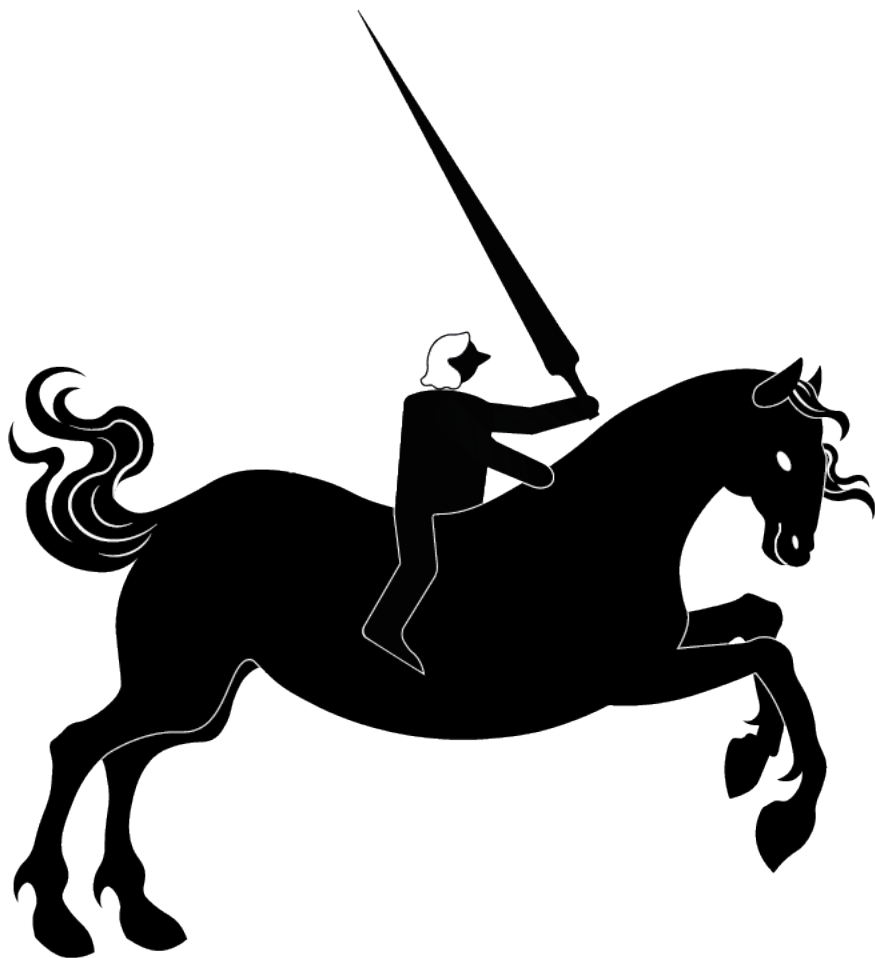
Lancelot promises to return.

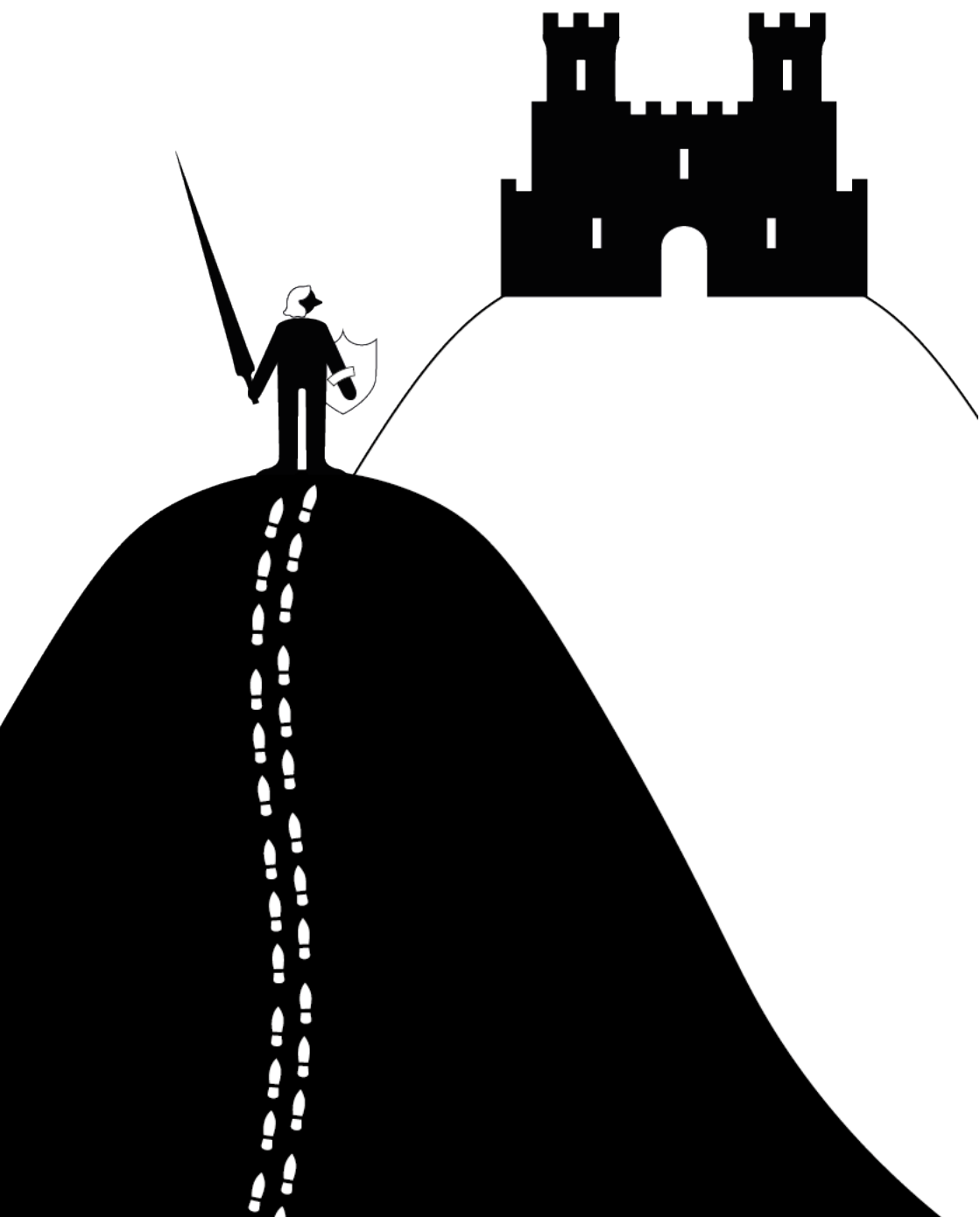
Then he takes the road to Camelot.



Viviane watches him disappear
in the distance.

She knows that a new story is beginning.





CHAPTER 6

The Best of Knights

How Lancelot joins the Round Table.

Lancelot travels for several days.

Finally, he sees Camelot.

The castle is big.

Many knights train there.

Lancelot admires their courage.

He asks to meet King Arthur.

Arthur agrees to receive him.

The young king observes Lancelot.

—Why do you want to become a knight?

Lancelot responds without hesitation:

— I want to protect others.

I want to defend justice.

Arthur smiles.

These words remind him of Merlin's advice.

He decides to put Lancelot to the test.

For several days, Lancelot trains.

He learns to fight.

He also learns to listen to others.

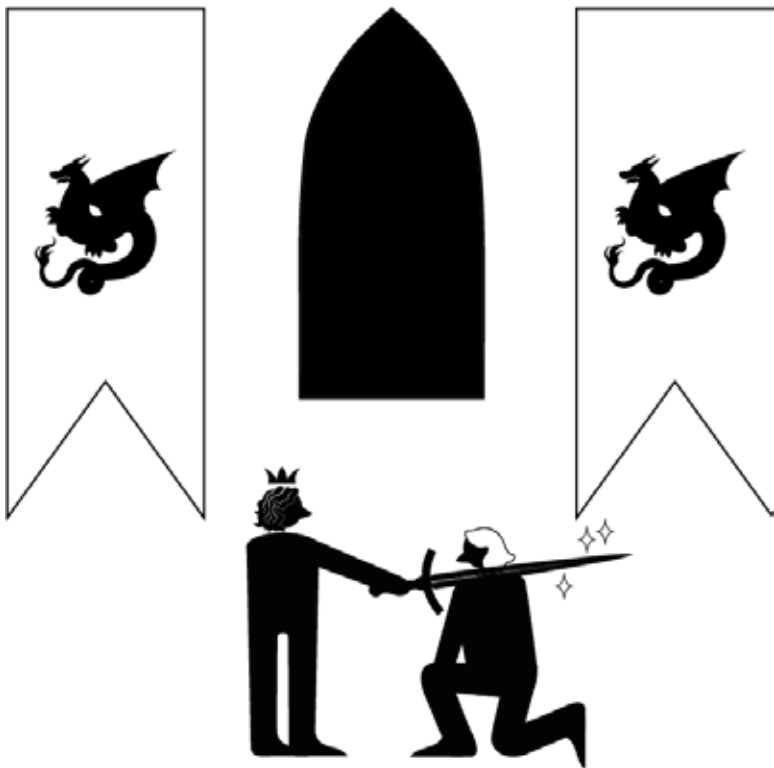
He always respects his opponents.

He never brags.

Arthur understands

that he has found an exceptional knight.

One morning, the whole court meets.
Arthur places his sword
on Lancelot's shoulders.
— I make you a knight
of the Round Table.



Lancelot thanks the king.
He promises to serve the kingdom
with courage and honesty.
The other knights welcome him with joy.

Very quickly, Lancelot becomes
their friend.
Together, they travel the kingdom.
They protect the villages.
They help travelers.
They defend the weakest.
Everywhere, people find hope.
Merlin watches all this with satisfaction.
Viviane also hears of Lancelot's exploits.
She smiles.
The young boy she raised
became a good man.

The years pass.

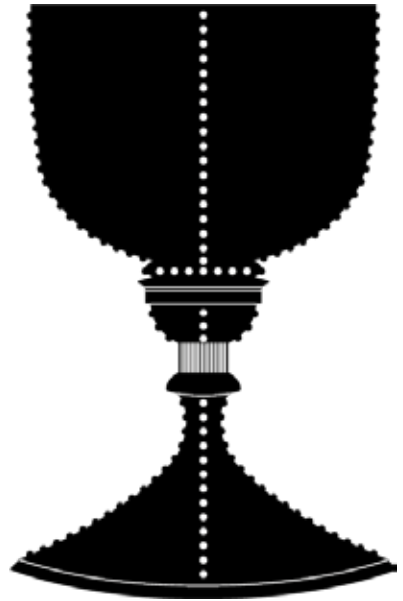
Camelot enjoys a long period of peace.

Many people think that this happiness
will last forever.

But, far from it, an ancient mystery
still awaits the knights.

It is said that a sacred cup
is hidden somewhere.

It is called the Grail.





CHAPTER 7

The Quest for the Grail

How the knights set out in search
of the Grail.

One day, an old pilgrim arrives
in Camelot.

He tells a strange story.

— There is a sacred cup.

It is called the Grail.

Whoever finds it will bring peace
and hope around him.

The knights listen attentively.

They want to find the Grail.

Arthur convenes the Round Table.

— This quest will be difficult.

It will take courage.

But also kindness and wisdom.

The knights accept.

They each go their separate ways.

They cross forests.

They cross mountains.

They spend long days on the roads.

They meet people who need help.

Lost travelers.

Children in danger.

Villages under threat.

The knights gradually understand
one thing.

The quest is not just about looking
for a cup.

It also consists of doing good around you.

Lancelot helps everyone he meets.

He fights with courage.

But he always remains humble.

Arthur is proud of his knights.

Merlin guides them when he can.

Viviane watches over them from afar.

Thanks to them,

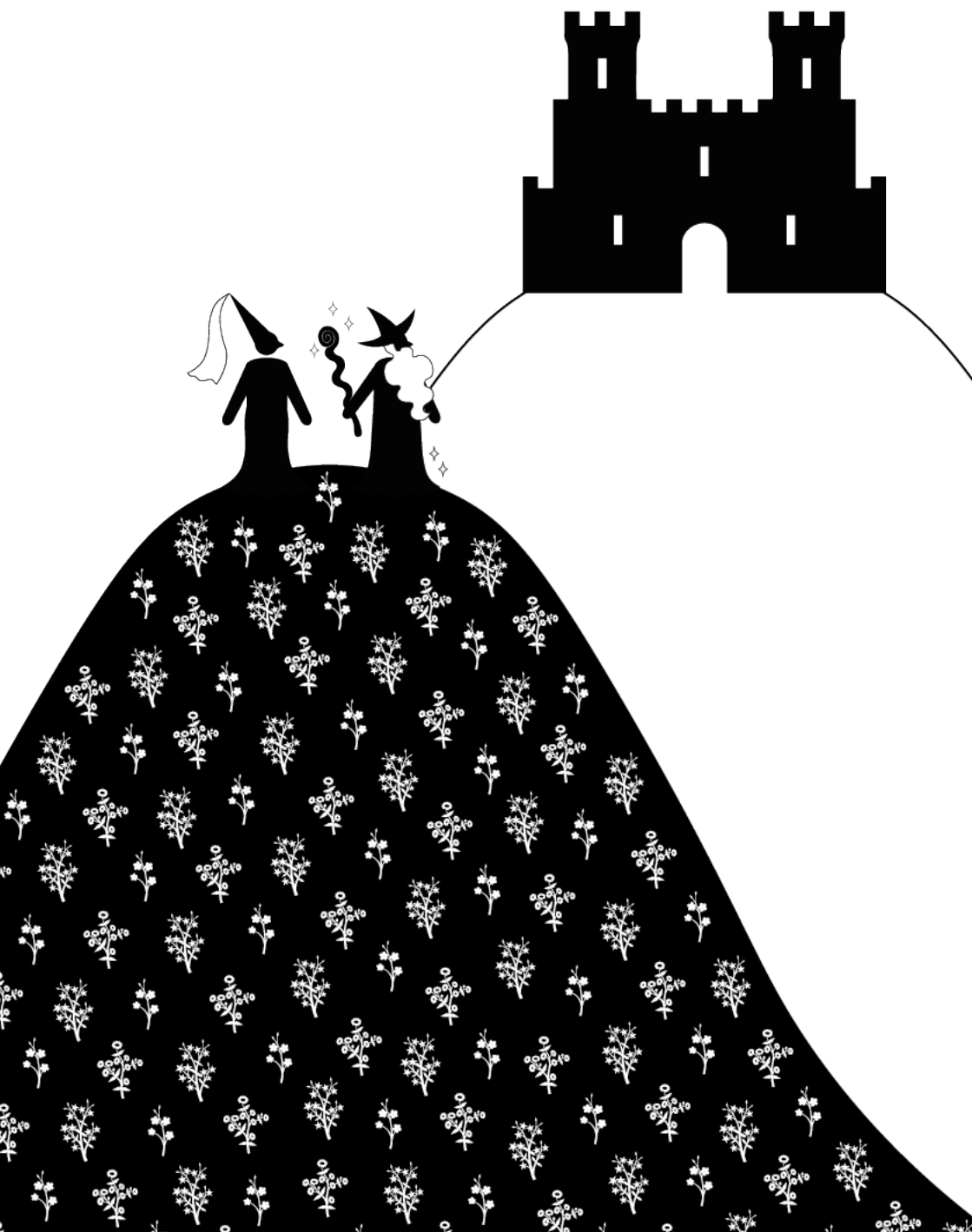
the kingdom remains at peace.

The people live in peace.

Camelot becomes a symbol of hope.
For many, it is the most beautiful
kingdom in the world.

However, Merlin sometimes keeps his
eyes turned towards the horizon.
He knows that the greatest trials often
come after the best days.







CHAPTER 8

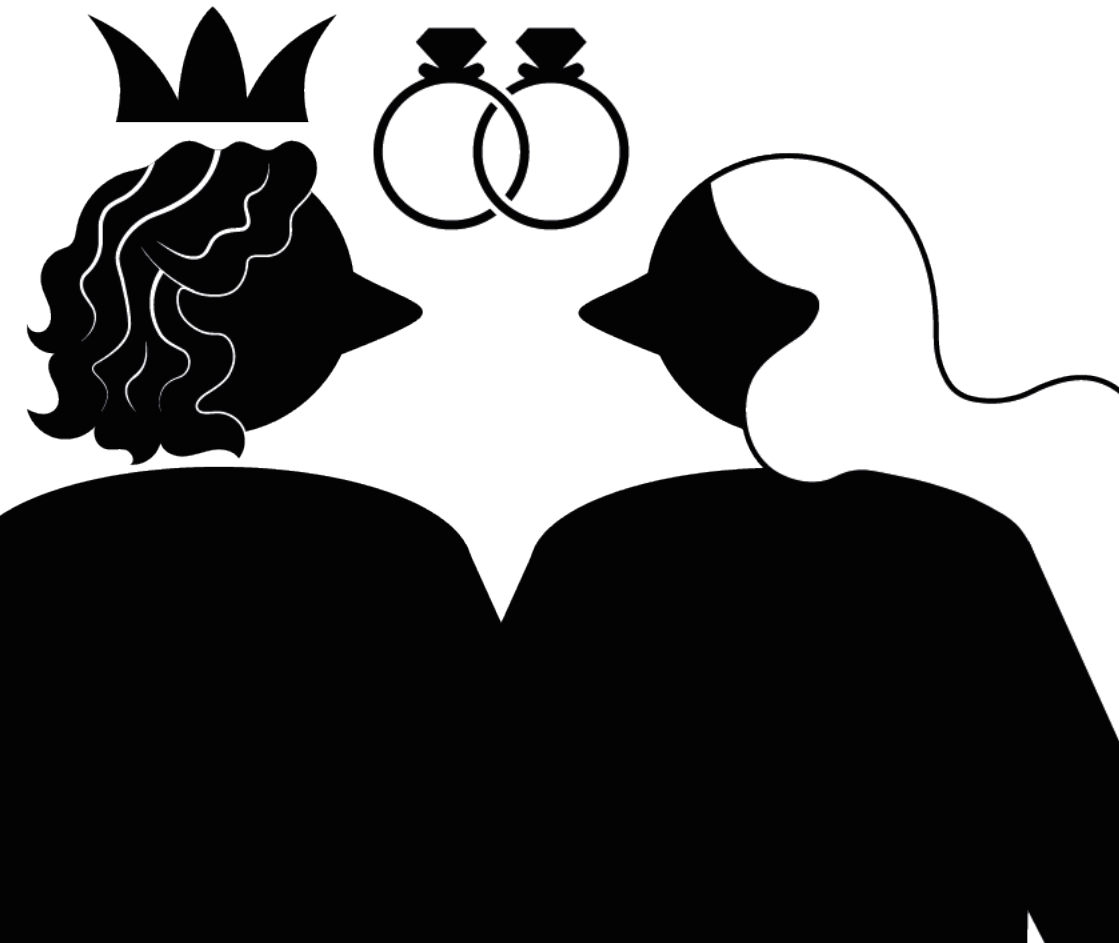
Queen Guinevere

How a new love comes to Camelot.

Some time later,
Arthur meets a young woman.
Her name is Guinevere.
She is intelligent.
She is generous.
Arthur falls in love with her.

Arthur and Guinevere decide
to get married.

A big party is organized in Camelot.
Guests come from all over the kingdom.
The knights are present.
Merlin and Viviane also attend the
ceremony.
They are happy with this union.



After the marriage, Guinevere becomes
the queen of Camelot.

She welcomes everyone with kindness.

The people love her.

The knights respect her.

She encourages them to stay united.

Lancelot becomes
one of his most loyal friends.

They like to talk together.

They admire each other's courage
and kindness.

Arthur trusts them.

To him, they are like family.





For several years, the kingdom
enjoys peaceful days.
The harvests are good.
The villages live in peace.
The knights continue to protect
the inhabitants.
The adventures of the Round Table
are told all over the country.

Yet Merlin sometimes remains silent.
He observes the stars.
Then he looks at Camelot.
His face becomes serious.
Viviane joins him.
—What do you see? she asks.

Merlin responds softly:

— Even the most beautiful kingdoms
can become fragile.

Viviane looks at the castle.

However, everything seems calm.

She does not yet know
that a great ordeal is approaching.



CHAPTER 9

The Kingdom in Danger

How the first problems appear in Camelot.

The years pass.

Arthur is still a just king.

Guinevere is a beloved queen.

Lancelot remains the greatest knight
of the Round Table.

The kingdom seems to be experiencing
happy times.

But not everyone shares this joy.

Some knights become jealous.

They find that Lancelot receives too many honors.

They whisper among themselves.

They tell false stories.

Little by little, rumors spread throughout the castle.

Some people are starting to doubt.

Arthur refuses to listen to these words.

He trusts his friends.

Guinevere too.

Lancelot continues to help others.

He never responds to insults.

Merlin watches what is happening.

He knows that words can do as much harm as a sword.

One evening, he finds Viviane near the lake.

«Men change quickly,» he says.

—What do you mean? asks Viviane.

— When jealousy grows, friendship
becomes more fragile.

Viviane remains silent.

She thinks of Arthur.

To Guinevere.

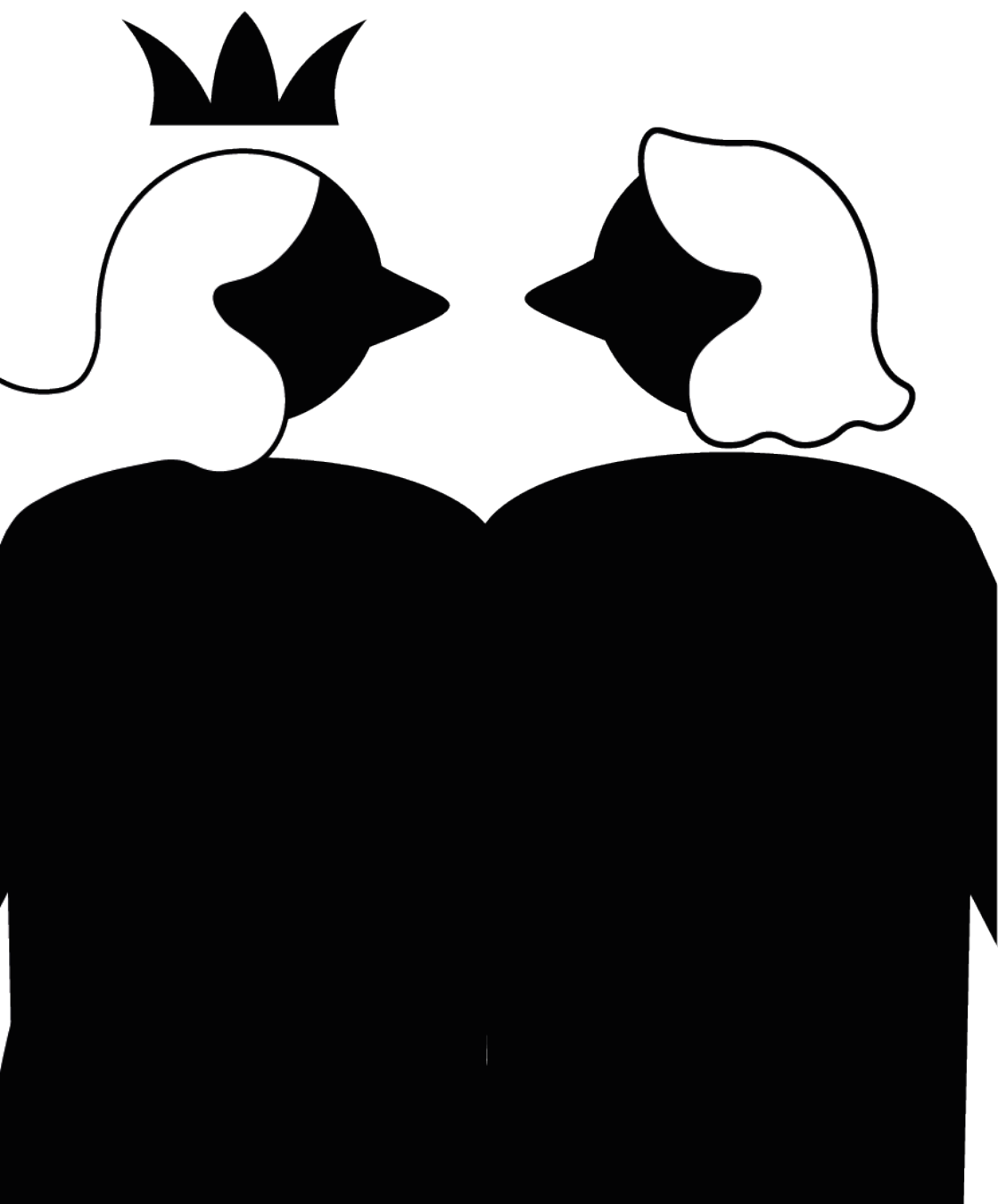
To Lancelot.

She hopes Merlin is wrong.

But, deep inside,
she feels that something is changing.

The wind blows across the lake.

Viviane feels that this wind announces
difficult days ahead.



CHAPTER 10

Heart Feelings

How feelings can change everything.

The years pass.

The kingdom is still beautiful.

Arthur is a just king.

Guinevere is a beloved queen.

Lancelot remains the greatest knight
of the Round Table.

The three of them spend a lot of time
together.

They trust each other.

They want to protect the kingdom.

Little by little, something changes.

Lancelot and Guinevere

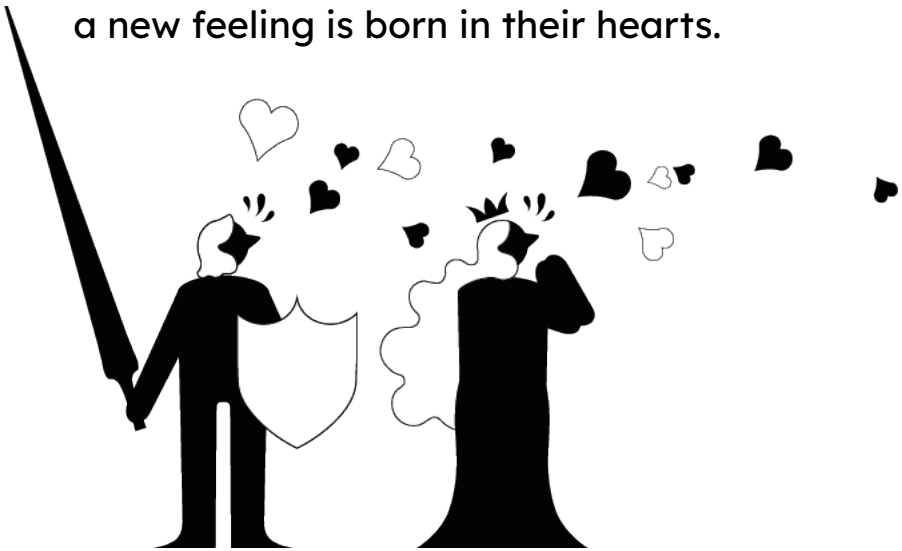
like to talk together.

They easily understand each other.

They share the same dreams.

Without wanting it,

a new feeling is born in their hearts.



At first they try to ignore it.
They know it can hurt Arthur.
They distance themselves.
They see each other less often.
But their feelings don't go away.
They understand that they are in love.
They are unhappy.
They don't want to betray anyone.
Yet they cannot stop their hearts
from speaking.



4

Little by little, people notice their looks.
Rumors start to circulate.
Jealous people tell false stories.
They add lies to truths.
The rumors reach Arthur.

At first, he refuses to believe it.
He loves Guinevere.



He loves Lancelot like a brother.
He trusts them.



But doubts gradually enter his heart.
He becomes quieter.
He smiles less often.



Lancelot suffers.
Guinevere also suffers.



Arthur suffers without understanding
the whole truth.

Merlin observes the kingdom.

He knows that the greatest enemies
don't always carry a sword.

One evening,

Viviane joins him near the lake.

—What's going on? she asks.

Merlin responds in a calm voice:

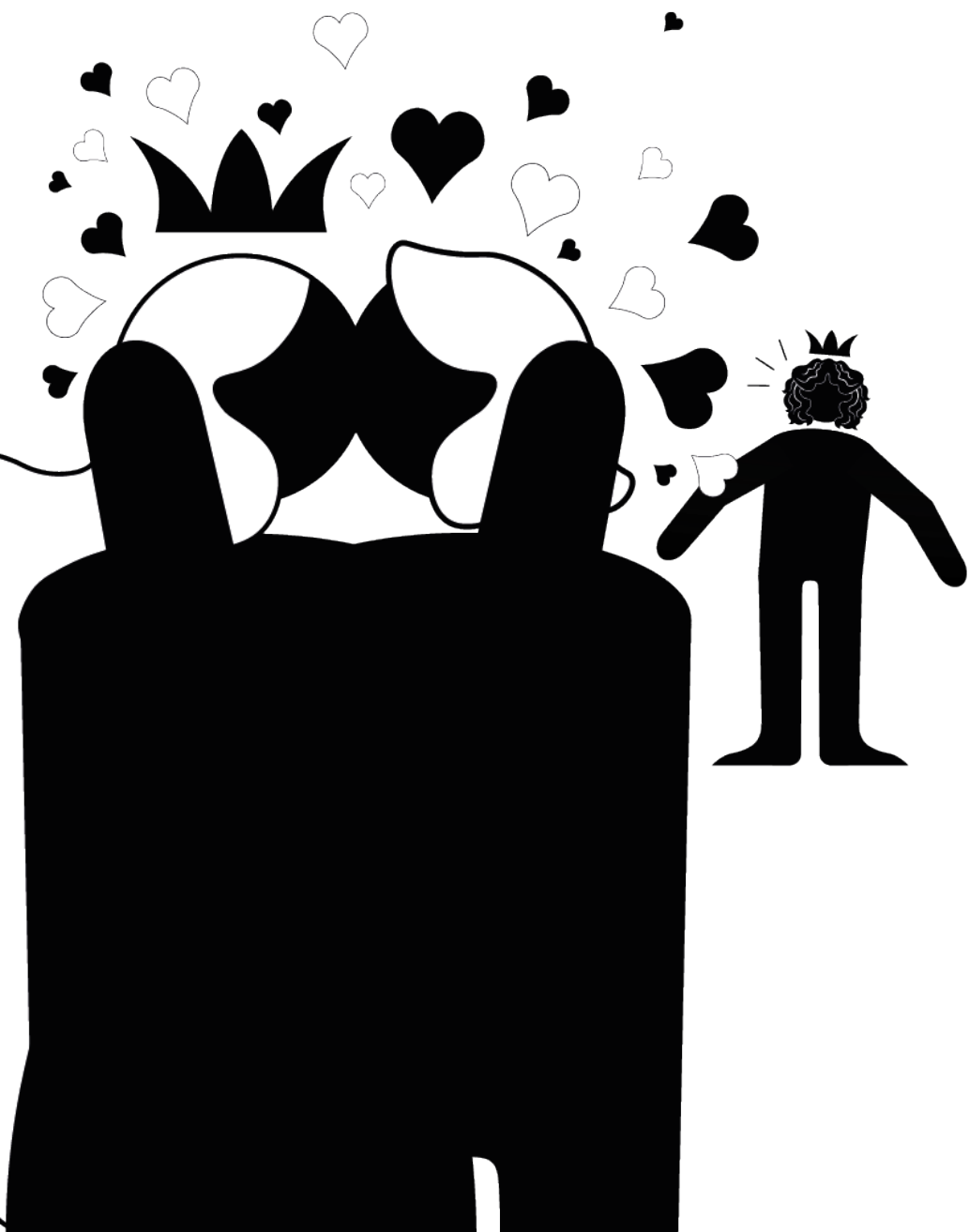
— Men can win the biggest battles.

He pauses.

— But sometimes it is more difficult
to fight against your own heart.

Viviane looks at the lake.

She understands that the happy days
of Camelot are soon coming to an end.



CHAPTER 11

The End of the Round Table

How Camelot is divided.

The rumors are getting louder and louder.

Soon, they are no longer secrets.

The whole kingdom talks about Arthur,
Guinevere and Lancelot.

Arthur realizes that the rumors are true.

He is very angry.

He is also very unhappy.

He feels betrayed by the two people
he trusted the most.

At that time, the law was very strict.
A queen who betrays her king must be
sentenced to death.
Arthur doesn't want to hurt Guinevere.
But he is also the king.
He thinks he has to follow the law.
Guinevere is arrested.
She doesn't defend herself.
She knows that her choices had serious
consequences.

Lancelot hears the news.
He can't let Guinevere die.
He comes to deliver her.
Knights try to stop him.
A fight breaks out.



Men are injured.

Others lose their lives.

From that day on, nothing was the same.

The Knights of the Round Table divide.

Some stay by Arthur's side.

Others follow Lancelot.



Friends become enemies.

The war begins.

The great Round Table is broken.

The dream of a united kingdom slowly
fades away.

Merlin watches Camelot from afar.

Viviane joins him near the lake.



—Is this the end? she asks.

Merlin lowers his head.

— Kingdoms sometimes fall
because of their enemies.

He pauses.

— But they also fall when men forget
their promises.

Viviane looks at the lake in silence.

She understands that the happy days
of Camelot are over.



CHAPTER 12

The Last Battle

How Arthur fights his last battle.

The war lasts a long time.

The kingdom is suffering.

Villages are destroyed.

Many knights disappear.

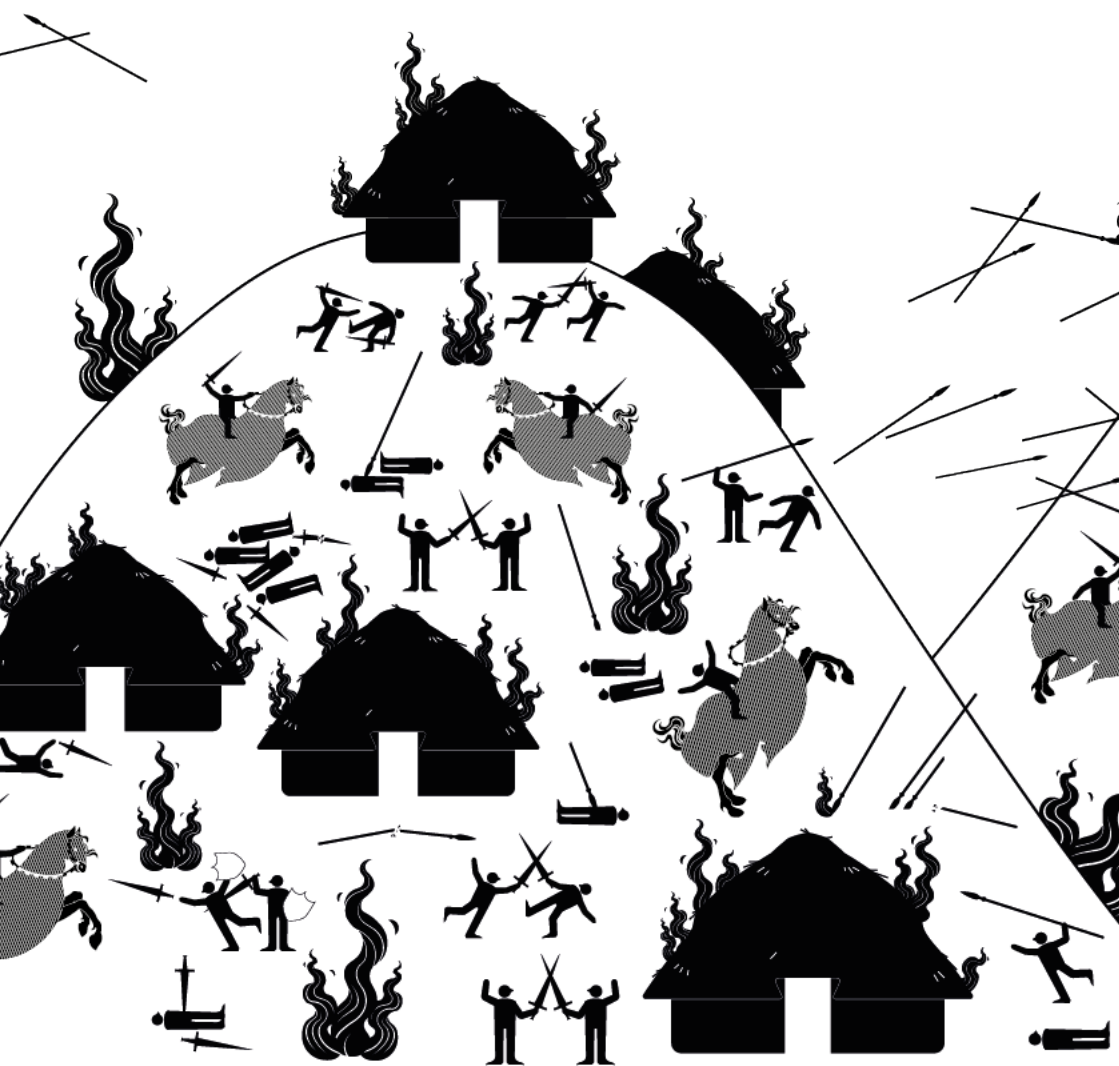
The Round Table almost no longer exists.

Meanwhile, a man wants to take power.

His name is Mordred.

He takes advantage of the divisions
of the kingdom.

He is gathering an army.





Arthur understands
that he must protect Camelot one last time.
He calls the knights who remained loyal to him.
Everyone knows that this battle
will be the most difficult.
The battle is long.
The two armies confront each other
with courage.

By the end of the day,
almost all the knights had fallen.
Arthur sees Mordred.
The two men look at each other.
They move towards each other.
Arthur wounds Mordred.
But, before he falls,
Mordred strikes Arthur with his sword.

The king is seriously injured.

The battle is over.

Silence returns.

Arthur looks at his kingdom.

He thinks of Merlin.

To Viviane.

To Guinevere.

To Lancelot.

He also thinks of the happy days of Camelot.

He whispers:

— I wanted to build a kingdom of peace.

Then he closes his eyes.

In the distance, a boat moves slowly
on the lake.

Viviane is on board.

She comes to take the king away.



CHAPTER 13

The Last Journey

How Arthur leaves for Avalon.

Viviane approaches Arthur.

The king is very weak.

He opens his eyes.

He recognizes the Lady of the Lake.

«My journey is over,» he says softly.

Viviane takes his hand.

Arthur looks at Excalibur one last time.

This sword has been

with him throughout his life.

“It must return to the lake,” he says.

Viviane takes Excalibur.

She raises the sword towards the sky.

Then she throws it into the lake.

The sword disappears underwater.

Viviane helps Arthur get into a boat.

The boat moves away slowly.

In the distance an island appears.



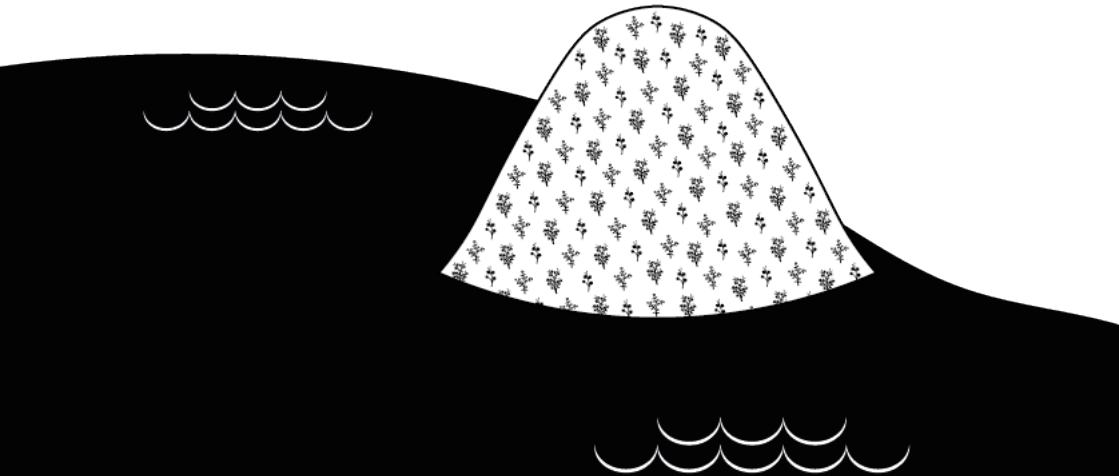
It's called Avalon.

Since that day, no one knows what
happened to Arthur.

Some think he is dead.

Others say he rests in Avalon.

The legend of Arthur spans the centuries.



It is about courage.

It is about friendship.

It is also about justice.

But above all it reminds us of one thing.

Even the greatest heroes

can make mistakes.

Even the most powerful kingdoms

can disappear.

Peace, trust and friendship are fragile.

We must protect them every day.

