The Knights and the Best Quest

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Barrington Stoke

For Jonanna and George

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THE CAST

KING ARTIE

QUEEN GWINNY

THE KNIGHTS

SIR PRANCELOT . . . . . the keen one

SIR PERCY . . . . . the fussy one

SIR GARY . . . . . the gloomy one

SIR TRALAHAD . . . . . the musical one

SIR BORE DE GANNET . . . ze French one

SIR ANGELA . . . . . she's a girl in disguise

THE STAFF

OLD TOBY . . . . . the gardener

SHAWN . . . . . the odd job boy

MRS SPUNGE . . . . . the cook

AGGIE . . . . . the serving wench

THE CASTLE ANIMALS

ETHEL . . . . . the cat

BOB . . . . . the dog

THE HORSES

STOP-A-LOT . . . . . who stops a lot

LIGHTNING . . . . . the slow one

BREAKWIND . . . . . don't stand behind him

ELTON . . . . . she's a mare

LOUD WINNIE . . . . . the noisy one

GNASHER . . . . . he bites

Prologue

It was lunch time at Castle Llamalot. The King was tucking into a big boar burger and chips. The Queen was picking at a plate of peacock fritters. Bob, the castle dog, lay under the table. He hoped some titbits might drop his way.

"So," the King said, as he dabbed his moustache with a napkin. "How is the knights' new room working out, darling? Any complaints?"

"Rather to my surprise, no," the Queen said. "There was the odd problem at first, of course. The table gave a bit of trouble. It collapsed in

the middle of their very first all knight party. But then, all drop-leafs do that. We didn't have a spare round one, and a drop-leaf table was the best I could do."

"Well, it was an excellent idea, Gwinny," the King said. "Clever old you, to give the knights a room of their own. Wonderful."

"Thank you, Artie," the Queen said. "I must say it is a lot more peaceful without them clanking up and down the castle corridors. But goodness knows what they do in their room all day. Aggie asked Angela – I mean, Sir AnGela – and she – *he*, I mean, *he* said, "Argue."

"Good, good," the King said, and he reached for the paper. His eye had caught a headline and he was fast losing interest in the knights.

"Old Toby fixed the table with a pot of Kwicky-Sticky and it seems to be holding," the Queen said. "Cook sends Aggie in with tea and biscuits every day. Aggie says that in between arguing they're talking about going on a quest."

“Mmm?”

“I said, they’re planning a quest.”

“Good, good. Excellent.”



"You're doing the sudoku, Artie. You're not listening."

"Oh, I am, I am," the King said. "They're planning what?"

"A quest. A competition to find out who's the bravest and noblest. They will award points and the one with the most points gets a prize."

"A prize?" the King said. "What prize?"

"I think they want us to supply that," the Queen said with a sigh. "I thought I'd offer them an old silver goblet. We've got a whole box full of them up in the loft."

"Well, as long as I'm not involved," the King said, with his nose back in the paper. "Have one of my chips, darling. You know you want to."