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Opening extract from

Arthur Of Albion

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Albion

Long ago, in the time before time, when the world was still filled with marvels, a fair green island lay beyond the Pillars of Hercules. In those days it had many names. Some called it Merlin's Isle, after the great enchanter who worked his magic upon the world in that time. Others called it the Island of the Mighty, because of the great heroes who dwelled there. But most called it Albion, after a giant who had ruled there ages before.

Albion was a land of many wonders. Dragons hid beneath the Hollow Hills by day and came out at night to light up the air with their flaming breath. The strange creature known as the Questing Beast roamed the land. It had the hide of a leopard, the haunches of a lion, the head and tail of a serpent and the feet of a hart. Only one man could capture it, and he had not yet been born.

Faery people from the Elf Mounds and the twilight world of Undern were often seen there, riding under the moon on mysterious errands of their own, for in those days there was still peace between the worlds of elves and men.

The island was divided into many small kingdoms, ruled over by strong kings. Each wanted to be known as the greatest in the land, and often they fought with each other to see who was the mightiest. For this reason the land grew troubled, for the people could not rest easy in their beds at night for fear that battle and war might overtake them and destroy their lives.

But Merlin the Wise made a prophecy that said: 'A king shall come who shall rule over these lands and as far afield as Rome herself, and his name shall be Arthur.'

His words were true, for the age of Arthur would soon begin.





Arthur of Albion

Arthur was the greatest king who ever lived in the island of Albion. It is said that he had faery blood in his veins and that this made him both wise and long-lived. It is also said that he could transform himself into a raven, and that in this form he flew all over the land searching for brave knights to serve him.

Of Arthur's Lineage

Arthur's father was King Uther Pendragon and his mother was Igraine, daughter of Avalach, whose own mother was of the faery people. Uther fought a great war over Igraine because when he first saw her she was the wife of Duke Gorlois of Cornouaille. After the duke was killed in battle, Uther married Igraine and in time she gave birth to the boy who would one day become king.

Of His Childhood Years

There were many men who wished to kill the son of King Uther and Queen Igraine, so one night Merlin, the great wizard of Albion, came to the royal hall and took away the baby. Some say that he gave the child to the elves, who brought him up in their own world and gave him many gifts, but others say that he was fostered upon a brave man named Sir Ector of the Savage Forest whose own son, Kay, grew up as Arthur's companion. When Arthur was a boy, Merlin often came to teach him the ways of magic and the laws of kingship.

Of Arthur's Reign

When Arthur became king, he asked Merlin to build him a great city that was to be called Camelot the Golden. And at the heart of the city would be a mighty hall with twenty-two windows. And in the midst of the hall would be a round table, where all the greatest knights in the land would sit together as equals.

So it was done as the young king asked, and in time the bravest and best of the knights of Albion came to King Arthur's court, and from there they went out through the land to keep the peace and help any who were in need. Thus began the great days of King Arthur, when magic was everywhere, and Albion was safe from evil men, and dragons and monsters went in fear of their lives.

Arthur married the most beautiful woman in the land, whose name was Guinevere, and together they ruled as king and queen over the glorious kingdom of Albion. In the pages of this book, you will read of the many brave deeds and exploits of Arthur's knights, and of the part played in their fates by Merlin, whose fame as a magician and prophet has never been surpassed.

Of the Sword in the Stone

Merlin knew that there were those among the lords of Albion who would not believe that Arthur was the son of Uther Pendragon and therefore the rightful king, so he arranged for a marvellous test that would prove, once and for all, who should be king. Using his magical arts, he took a block of marble and placed within it a fiery sword, so that only the hilt showed. Then he made it so that only Arthur could free this sword. And having done that, he conjured a storm of thunder and lightning, in the midst of which the marble block with the sword embedded within appeared outside the greatest church in the land. So begins the first of these tales of Arthur,

High King of Albion.

