



The Sword in the Stone

In olden times, so the legend tells us, King Uther Pendragon died and whoever was to be the next King of England had to pass a test. The knight who could pull the sword from the stone would be the rightful King of England. The bravest knights in the land assembled to try their luck.

The Knights gathered around the huge block of stone. Thrust into the stone was a huge sword. Written on the sword were these words:

He who pulls this sword out of this stone, is the true King of England.

All the knights, one after another, stepped up to the stone. They grasped the sword and pulled, and pulled, and pulled! But no one was able to pull the sword from the stone.

'The one who is to be our new King is not here,' said the Archbishop. 'But I am sure he will come. Let us appoint ten knights to guard the sword and on New Year's Day we will meet here again to see if our new King shows himself.' Everyone agreed that ten knights should stand guard over the sword.

On New Year's Day, knights came from all over the land to see if they could pull the sword from the stone. Among them were Sir Ector, his son Sir Kay and Arthur. Arthur was Sir Ector's adopted son and squire to Sir Kay.

They were nearly at the meeting place when Sir Kay exclaimed, 'I have left my sword behind!' No knight should ever be without his sword! 'Arthur,' said Sir Kay, 'would you go back to the lodgings to get my sword?'

'Of course,' replied Arthur. 'I will go straight away. You go on and I'll catch you up as soon as I can.'

Arthur rode quickly back to the lodgings. The door was locked. He banged on the door but there was no answer. Everyone had gone to the meeting

place to see who could pull the sword from the stone. *I know where I can get a sword,* Arthur thought to himself.

He rode swiftly to the meeting place. It was deserted as everyone had gathered to watch the knights jousting nearby. Arthur dismounted, walked quickly to the huge stone and, without effort, pulled out the sword. He got back on his horse and galloped to find his father and Sir Kay.

Sir Kay was delighted to have his sword but it felt odd in his hand. He ran his eye down the sword and realised that this was not his sword. It was the sword from the stone! Arthur had brought him the sword from the stone! Sir Kay found Sir Ector and showed him the sword. 'Surely I am the true King of England as I have the sword from the stone,' he said, confidently.

Sir Ector was puzzled. He directed Sir Kay and Arthur to the stone and asked Sir Kay, 'Show me how you got this sword, then.'

Sir Kay's face fell but he answered honestly, 'Arthur brought me the sword.'

Sir Ector turned to Arthur. 'Did you pull the sword from the stone?' Arthur told his father that he had gone back to the lodgings but he couldn't get in to get Sir Kay's sword.

He knew where there was a sword so he went and got it.

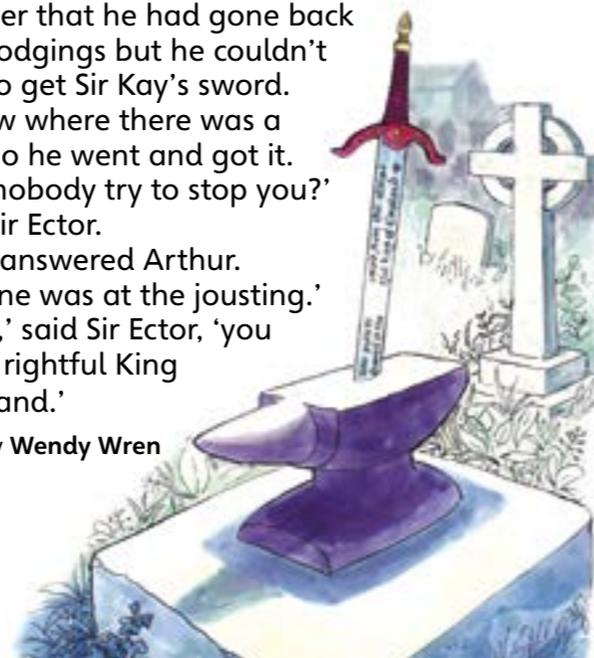
'Did nobody try to stop you?' asked Sir Ector.

'No,' answered Arthur.

'Everyone was at the jousting.'

'Well,' said Sir Ector, 'you are the rightful King of England.'

Retold by Wendy Wren



Understanding the text

- 1 What was in the huge block of stone?
- 2 What did the knights try to do?
- 3 What was going to happen on New Year's Day?
- 4 What had Sir Kay forgotten?
- 5 From where did Arthur get the sword?

Looking at language

- 6 Explain these phrases in your own words.

a in olden times **b** try their luck **c** straight away
d without effort **e** ran his eye down **f** Sir Kay's face fell

- 7 Explain the meaning of these words as they are used in the story. Use a dictionary to help you.

a rightful **b** appoint **c** adopted
d squire **e** deserted **f** jousting

Exploring the story

- 8 Why do you think all the knights tried to pull the sword from the stone?
- 9 Why do you think it was necessary to guard the sword?
- 10 Why do you think 'No knight should ever be without his sword'?
- 11 Why do you think the sword felt odd in Sir Kay's hand?
- 12 What impression do you get of Sir Kay?
- 13 Do you think Arthur will turn out to be the hero or the villain in this story? Explain your reasons.

Taking it further

- 14 In the next part of the story, Sir Ector tells the Archbishop and the knights what Arthur has done. How do you think they react?

▶ RB, Unit 10, Extension

Mowgli is Rescued

Mowgli has lived with the wolf pack in the jungle since he was a baby. Bagheera the panther and Baloo the bear have been his friends and teachers. One day, Mowgli is captured by the monkeys and taken to their home on the edge of the jungle. Bagheera and Baloo, with the help of Kaa the rock python, are determined to rescue Mowgli the man cub.

The cloud hid the moon and, as Mowgli wondered what would come next, he heard Bagheera's light feet on the terrace. The black panther had raced up the slope almost without a sound and was striking – he knew better than to waste time in biting – right and left among the monkeys, who were seated around Mowgli in circles 50 and 60 deep. There was a howl of fright and rage, and then Bagheera tripped on the rolling, kicking bodies beneath him. A monkey shouted, 'There is only one here! Kill him! Kill!'

A scuffling mass of monkeys, biting, scratching, tearing and pulling, closed over Bagheera. Five or six laid hold of Mowgli, dragged him up the wall of the summer-house and pushed him through the hole of the broken dome. A man-trained boy would have been badly bruised for the fall was a good 15 feet, but Mowgli fell as Baloo had taught him to fall, and he landed on his feet.

Then from the ruined wall nearest the jungle rose up the rumbling war-shout of Baloo. 'Bagheera,' he shouted, 'I am here. I climb! I haste! AHUWOO! The stones slip under my feet!' He panted up the terrace only to disappear to the head in a wave of monkeys, but he threw himself squarely on his haunches and, spreading out his forepaws, hugged as many as he could

hold. He then began to hit with regular bat-bat-bat, like the flipping strokes of a paddlewheel. A crash and a splash told Mowgli that Bagheera had fought his way to the tank where the monkeys could not follow.

Kaa had only just worked his way over the west wall, landing with a wrench that dislodged a coping stone into the ditch. He had no intention of losing any advantage of the ground and coiled and uncoiled himself once or twice to be sure that every foot of his long body was in working order. All that while the fight with Baloo went on and the monkeys yelled in the tank around Bagheera. Then Kaa came straight, quickly, and anxious to kill. The fighting strength of a python is in the driving blow of his head, backed by all the strength and weight of his body. A python four or five feet long can knock a man down if he hits him fairly in the chest. Kaa was 30 feet long. His first stroke was delivered into the heart of the crowd around Baloo ... and then there was no need of a second. The monkeys scattered with cries of, 'Kaa! It is Kaa! Run! Run!'

The Jungle Book, Rudyard Kipling



Understanding the text

- 1 What kind of animal is Bagheera?
- 2 Who did Bagheera attack?
- 3 Where was Mowgli?
- 4 Where did the monkeys push Mowgli?
- 5 Who made the monkeys scatter?

Looking at language

- 6 Explain the meaning of these words as they are used in the story. Use a dictionary to help you.

a terrace	b striking	c scuffling
d dome	e haste	f haunches

- 7 The writer uses lots of words to describe the way Bagheera and the monkeys fought. Find at least three of them in the story.

Exploring the story

- 8 How do you know that this part of the story takes place at night?
- 9 How do you think Mowgli felt when he heard 'Bagheera's light feet on the terrace'?
- 10 Why was Mowgli not a 'man-trained boy'?
- 11 Why do you think Bagheera fought his way to the tank?
- 12 Why do you think Kaa did not have to strike twice?
- 13 Who do you think is the hero of the story? Explain your reasons.

Taking it further

▶ RB, Unit 10, Extension

- 14 Mowgli is stuck in the summer-house. How do you think Baloo, Bagheera and Kaa get him out?

The Storm

This is an old story about the Lin maiden and how those in danger at sea are guided home by the light of her lantern.

A long time ago and a long way away, there lived a family named Lin. There was a father, a mother, two sons and a daughter.

The daughter was loved and admired by all who knew her. She made breakfast for the family every morning. She went down to the sea with her father and brothers to get the boats and nets ready for the day's fishing. When her father and brothers launched their boats she called, 'Good wind and good weather!' The local people called her the Lin maiden.

One day, after her father and brothers had gone fishing, the Lin maiden was working in the house with her mother. After their midday meal, she felt very sleepy. She closed her eyes and dreamed a strange dream. In the dream, five dragon brothers who lived beneath the sea were angry. They lashed their tails. Mountains crumbled into the sea and huge waves rose up to the sky.

In the middle of this fierce storm she saw her father and brothers in their little boats tossed about on the waves. She rushed to the shore and waded into the water. She managed to catch hold of the rope tied to her father's boat. She held it in her teeth while she grabbed the ropes tied to her brothers' boats. She began to pull the boats to the safety of the shore.

At this point in her dream, her mother woke her up. The Lin maiden was still half asleep and dreaming. She was startled, opened her mouth and felt the rope slip from between her teeth. Her father's boat disappeared under the sea.

The afternoon passed. The evening passed. Mother and daughter waited anxiously for the men to come home. Only two brothers returned. 'Our Father's boat is missing,' said one of the brothers.

The Lin maiden ran out of the house and down to the seashore. She dived into the water to look for her lost father and did not come back.

As time passed, her brothers and other fishermen started to see her out at sea at times of raging storms. No one who is at sea and sees the Lin maiden is ever in danger. They reach the shore unharmed, guided by her lantern and watched over by her.

Retold by **Wendy Wren**



Understanding the text

- 1 What did the Lin maiden do every morning?
- 2 What did the five dragon brothers do when they were angry?
- 3 In her dream, how did the Lin maiden hold on to the ropes of her father's and brothers' boats?
- 4 What happened when her mother woke her up?
- 5 When she realised her father was lost, what did the Lin maiden do?

Looking at language

- 6 Explain these words as they are used in the story. Use a dictionary to help you.

a admired	b launched	c lashed
d waded	e startled	f anxiously

Exploring the story

- 7 What impression do you get of the Lin maiden?
- 8 Why do you think she called out 'Good wind and good weather!' when the boats were launched?
- 9 How do you think the dream made her feel?
- 10 Why do you think mother and daughter waited 'anxiously' for the men to return?
- 11 Do you think the Lin maiden is the heroine of the story or not? Explain your reasons.

Taking it further

▶ **RB, Unit 10, Extension**

- 12 The mother and daughter waited all afternoon and evening for the men to come back. What do you think they said to each other? Write their conversation.